

# CHANDAMAMA

MARCH 1995

Rs. 5.00



Turn to Page  
19 for "Adventures  
of Ulysses"





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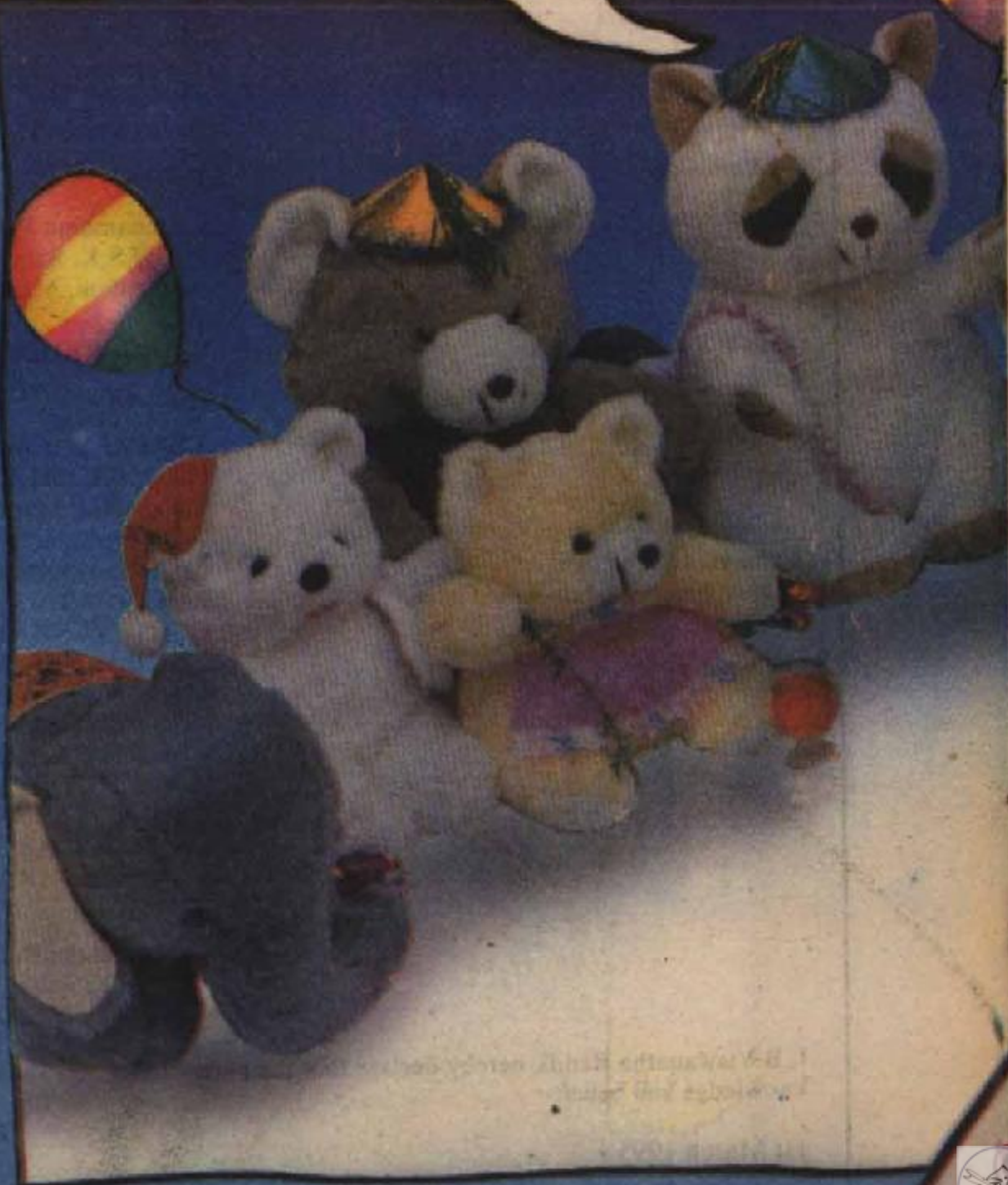
I, B Viswanatha Reddi, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

1st March 1995

**B. VISWANATHA REDDI**  
*Signature of the Publisher*



Say "Hello" to text books and friends  
'Cause School days are here again  
Have a great year and all the best  
From Wobbit, Coon and the rest!





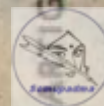
It's time to go back to school again. Time for text  
books. Time for games. Time to meet old friends.  
And make new ones. Time to start studying  
again. Because there's so much to learn about  
the world around you.

From all of us here at Chandamama, have a  
great year in school. And remember to tell us  
what you've learnt everyday, when you  
come home from school !



CHANDAMAMA  
COLLECTION

51246



# CHANDAMAMA

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## NEXT ISSUE

Vol. 25      APRIL 1995      No. 10

**KING RAGHAVENDRA:** King Raghavendra of Kanaka turns a deaf ear to the cries of anguish resulting from his misrule. Friendly King Chitrasena of Chanda tries to advise him, but he does not pay any heed. Shouts of abuse outside the palace interrupts their game of dice. They come out, to hear a young boy questioning Raghavendra how he can remain callous to his people's problems. The king sends him away with a slap. His guards tell him that the boy only wanted a rare herb from the royal garden for his ailing father. A while later, more shouting is heard. The boy is back, accusing the king of causing his father's death. He hurls a curse at Raghavendra. He will die of the same disease and the herb which alone can cure him will be denied to him. The boy even sets a date. The mini-serial moves into some exciting sequences.

**THE CURSE OF BINDIPUR:** Bindipur earns a curse from none else than Lord Brahma. Nobody in the kingdom can ever touch or wield a weapon. No wonder, demons take advantage and harass the people of Bindipur. Prince Ashoka Varma of Chandipur strays into Bindipur and is told of the curse, which does not debar him from taking up arms against the marauders. But does he succeed? The story, coming from a young writer, has a surprise for the reader.

**PLUS** all the regular features, including the adventures of ULYSSES, stories from the MAHABHARATA and the PANCHATANTRA, and the pull-out on FORTS OF INDIA.

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Founder  
CHAKRAPANI

Controlling Editor :  
NAGI REDDI

## ***ENTERTAINMENT FOR CHILDREN***

Last month we had occasion to mention about the advisability of a separate TV Channel for children. Even if we take into consideration the limited number of hours of their wakeful time they sit in front of the TV, two questions remain: Do we have appropriate programmes of entertainment to be telecast? Can we prepare such programmes and ensure a regular supply to the TV?

Take, for instance, children's films. India produces anything between 700 and 800 feature films every year. Those which come under the category of children's films can be counted on one's fingers! A smaller country like Bulgaria brings out 70 to 80 movies, half of which are meant for children.

People involved in making movies for children in India often grope for stories – forgetting that our country has a rich repository of mythology, legends, folklore, and an eventful history of nearly five thousand years. In countries like the U.S.A. and U.K., film makers produce successful movies out of best-sellers. Some of the stories that have appeared in print in Indian magazines lend themselves to being adapted for entertaining movies.

For that matter, it need not be movies and movies alone on the TV. Children these days are very much interested in sports, progress of science, inventions and innovations, hobbies, even places of interest, for, don't they like outings and picnicking? Of themes there cannot be any dearth. Anything that provides clean, healthy entertainment would be acceptable to children.



## A Lakshmi in Life

**M**angamma of Mangala village was better known as Kali. Just as the very mention of the goddess's name evoked scare, people were afraid of Mangamma, because she was greedy and only cared for money and wealth. Her aim in life was to find ways and means of making money, and more money. She had become a widow when her son and daughter were still young. She educated them with the little savings her husband had left for them. She also managed to give away daughter Lakshmi in marriage. Now son Govinda had to be found a bride. Mangamma very much wished that he married a girl from a very rich family. She would certainly bring a sizeable dowry and plenty of gold ornaments. After that, the greedy woman thought, she would lead a royal life.

government job and many parents of girls of marriageable age went to Mangamma with proposals. But she rejected all of them for one reason or another. The real reason, however, was that the proposals did not come with the kind of dowry that she expected. And Govinda was, in his heart of hearts, happy because he had already found a girl for himself. He very much wished that she should become his wife.

Gita was an intelligent girl, clever, and mild-mannered. Her only drawback was that she came from a poor family. Moreover her father, Somu, and Mangamma used to have frequent quarrels — all because he was not affluent. Mangamma had no soft corner for him. So, Govinda knew well that his mother would not approve of an alliance with Gita's family. He posed the problem with her and

Fortunately, Govinda had a

asked her to suggest a solution herself.

"First, you must bring about a change of heart in your mother," said Gita, after thinking for a while. "Only then will we be able to live happily after our marriage."

"True, but it's difficult to change my mother's mind," remarked Govinda, sounding hopeless. "Anyway, let's try that, slowly."

"I shall think of a way out in a couple of days time," said Gita, before she took leave of Govinda. She consulted her father, and between them they thought of a plan. Govinda agreed to their suggestion. The plan worked well a week later. That day, Gita had come out of her house to sweep the courtyard when she saw a *sanyasi* lying in a swoon in their compound. She went and called her father. "Appa! Come, quick!" she cried out as she went inside. "A *sanyasi* seems to have fainted. He's lying motionless in our compound!"

Somu rushed out and managed to raise the *sanyasi* on his legs and brought him inside, laid him on a cot and covered him with a blanket. Soon, he woke up and looked around. Somu was by his side and



listened to whatever the *sanyasi* was mumbling. He said he was Arulanand and was nearly a hundred years old. He had been doing *tapas* in the Himalayas for several years, and was now certain that he would die in the next two years. Before that happened, he wished to pass on all his unique powers to someone who would use them for the service of humanity. This was what his own *guru* had instructed him. Accordingly, he was going from place to place in search of people who could receive the various *mantras* from him. By the time he arrived in Mangala village, he





felt dead tired and swooned before he could ask for proper shelter.

Word soon spread that a sanyasi had arrived in Somu's house and that he possessed miraculous powers. People made a bee-line to call on him, carrying fruits and flowers as offering. However, not all of them were able to talk to him and consult him. Only a few got that privilege, and one of them happened to be Narayanan who stayed opposite Mangamma's house. She came to know that the sanyasi, Arulananda, had passed on some rare mantras to him. Mangamma was struck with jeal-

ousy. She decided to visit the sanyasi, hoping that he would also bless her and give her some mantras, too. But she suddenly remembered that the sanyasi was a guest in the house of Somu with whom she used to quarrel quite often. She was reluctant to go to his house, as she would have to meet Somu there before she was taken to the sanyasi's presence. After a day or two of contemplation, she shook off her reluctance, mustered enough courage, and went over to Somu's place.

She found a crowd waiting to be called by the sanyasi. Someone told her that the sanyasi was busy teaching mantras to Gita. This was confirmed by Somu, who greeted her without showing any sign of their animosity for each other. "It's only today that the sanyasi could call Gita. He said he would give her a mantra to propitiate goddess Lakshmi. I am told, if anyone were to chant this mantra eight times on a particular moonlit night, she would find eight gold coins each in eight different places in her house. This mantra is given only to women. Gita is really blessed. He may bless you as well and give you some mantra. Please



wait."

As she waited for her turn to come, Mangamma suddenly thought that it would be nice if her son Govinda married Gita. Somu might be a poor man and might not be able to give his daughter much dowry. But that would not matter. After all, with the help of the mantra given to her by the sanyasi, she would acquire a lot of gold coins and thus become rich. And she herself would be able to lead a royal life.

While she sat engrossed in such thoughts, she found people being ushered into the sanyasi's presence. When her turn came, she went and prostrated before him and requested him to visit her house. Arulanand smiled and said, "This is my last day in this village. My guru's instructions are that I should not stay in a village for more than a week. I shall come back here after six months when the daughter of the family here will do a *puja* for goddess Lakshmi under my guidance. At that time, I shall visit your house for a day. Now you must excuse me."

"As you say, swami!" said Mangamma. "I shall wait for that day. Meanwhile, I have a request.



The girl, Gita, who will perform the Lakshmi puja, has endeared herself to me. I have known her since she was a little girl. I am very keen that she became my daughter-in-law. Somehow, her father is inimical to me. Sire, would you advise me how I should proceed in the matter?"

Arulanand closed his eyes and went into contemplation for sometime. "Is your son's name Govind?" he asked her on opening his eyes. "Is he employed with the government?"

Mangamma was surprised, How did the sanyasi know his





son's name and where he was employed? "Yes, swami!" she responded. Her face had now brightened up. "It's for Govinda that I'm seeking this alliance."

Arulanand then sent for Somu. "Son! You know this lady, don't you? Her son, Govind, is a well-behaved young man. He'll make a good husband to your daughter. What do you say?"

"Of course, with your blessings, swami!" said Somu, bowing low before Arulanand.

A month after the sanyasi left Mangala village, the marriage of Govind and Gita took place.

When the girl entered her husband's house, Mangamma behaved affectionately towards her, hoping that she would soon bring in riches. The moment she stepped into her new home, Gita brought in a lot of changes, though not riches, immediately. She converted the backyard into a kitchen garden. She had also a cattle-shed put up where she kept two buffaloes. Soon she began selling milk and vegetables. With whatever income she earned from all these, she managed to repay all the loans Mangamma had taken.

The old lady was only too happy over the prosperity she and her family now enjoyed. At the same time, she was eagerly waiting for the day Gita would undertake the Lakshmi puja and receive the gold coins from the goddess. Days went by, also weeks and months, and Mangamma was getting impatient. The auspicious day arrived at last. Somu escorted Arulanand to Mangamma's house. She received the sanyasi with great reverence. "Your house seems to have already received the blessings of the goddess!" remarked Arulananda. "Must be the work of Gita!" As he



said that, the sanyasi pulled at his flowing beard. It came off in his hands. He then took off his wig with the knotted hair. Mangamma could not believe her eyes. "Oh! It's you?" she cried out.

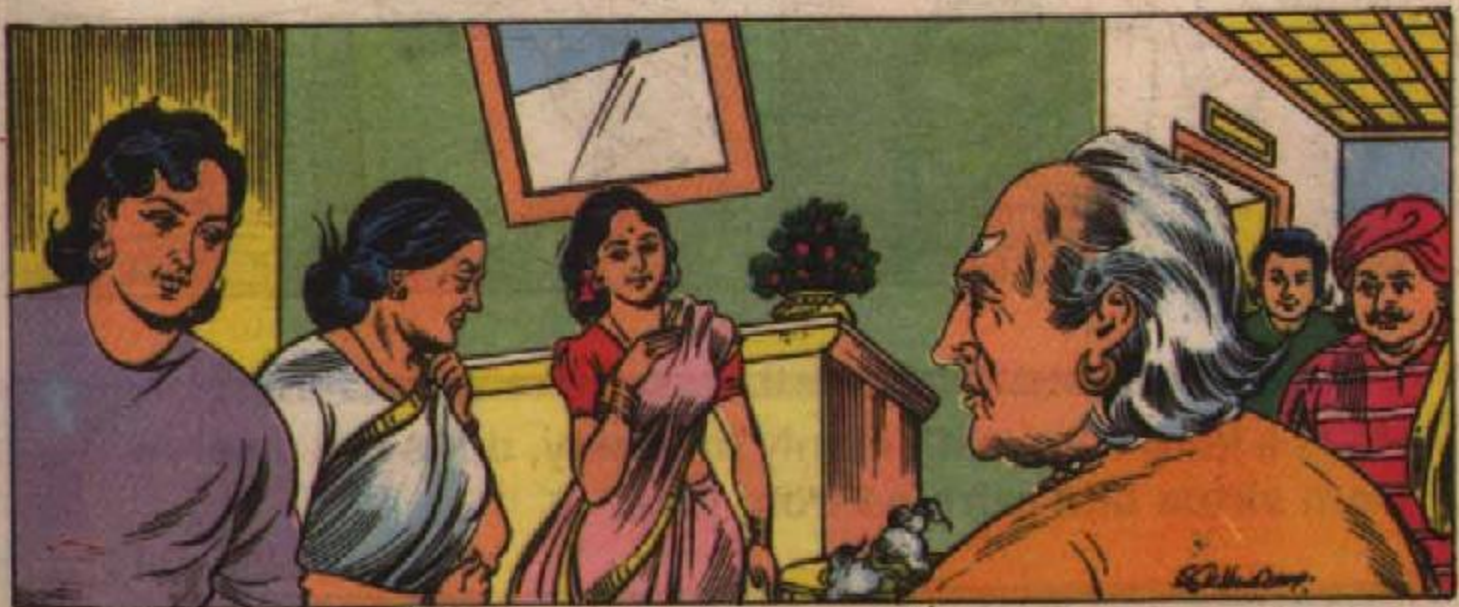
"Yes, Mangamma, I'm your husband's uncle," the man said. Turning to Govinda, he said. "I'm your grandfather's brother. Your mother drove away her father-in-law and mother-in-law. I can't tell you what kind of torture your mother inflicted on them – all for money and wealth. Anyway, I left home and joined a drama troupe and looked after my parents. All this is known to Somu and Narayana. What do you say, Mangamma? Am I not telling the truth?"

Mangamma's face fell. "I thought Gita and Govind's mar-

riage would take place only if I staged this farce," Arulanand continued. "You were proving a hindrance to the union by quarrelling with Somu. Gita knows how you had behaved with your mother-in-law. It's better if you abide by whatever she says as long as you stay with her. If you misbehave, remember, you'll get it back from Gita just as you did with your mother-in-law."

The woman fell at his feet and begged his pardon. "I regret my behaviour. I shall abide by Gita's instructions. In fact, I feel she is a godsend. It's my fortune that she had become my daughter-in-law. She need not do any Lakshmi puja. She is herself another Lakshmi."

Everybody was happy to see the change that had come over Mangamma.



THE JACKAL EATS THE FLESH OF THE ELEPHANT TO HIS HEART'S CONTENT, WHEN ANOTHER JACKAL APPROACHES THE PLACE.



AHI HERE COMES A JACKAL! HE'S MY KINSMAN. I KNOW HIS STRENGTH... I'LL FIGHT WITH HIM.



BALIVARDHA CONCLUDES THE STORY THUS.

GO HOME AND, LIKE THE JACKAL, FIGHT WITH YOUR EQUAL.

DRIVE AWAY THE CROCODILE FROM YOUR DWELLING. HE IS OF YOUR OWN RACE.



SO, KEEP THIS ADVICE IN MIND. WIN OVER THE GREAT BY OBEDIENCE AND THE FIGHTER BY TACT...



.... THE TOADY BY BRIBERY AND AN EQUAL BY FIGHTING.



YES, I'LL FOLLOW YOUR ADVICE.



ONLY KINSFOLK GIVE TROUBLE.



ONCE A DOG NAMED DEENA LIVED IN A FAMINE-STRICKEN TOWN.



I'M... STARVING HERE.



SO HE GOES TO ANOTHER TOWN.



HA! I'M LUCKY. WOMEN HERE SEEM TO BE CARELESS; THEY LEAVE THE DOORS AJAR.



He is a king who, with manly modesty, does not swerve from virtue and refrains from vice.

— Thirukkural

THE DOG SNEAKS INTO HOUSES AND FILLS HIMSELF WITH PLENTY OF FOOD



AHA! WHAT A FEAST! BHAU!



ONE DAY, WHILE COMING OUT OF A HOUSE, A PACK OF DOGS ATTACK HIM.



BHOW! BHOW! BHOW BHOW



WHY ARE YOU HERE? BHOW! GET OUT! BHOW BHOW!



BADLY BRUISED AND HURT, DEENA RUNS AWAY IN PANIC...



... AND RETURNS TO HIS NATIVE PLACE.

GOOD TO LIVE IN ONE'S OWN PLACE, THOUGH FAMINE-STRICKEN.



MY DEAR FRIEND! WHAT WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE IN THE TOWN?



WOMEN ARE CARELESS: YOU'VE FREE ACCESS TO KITCHENS.

GOOD!



AND THE FOOD IS VERY TASTY.

VERY GOOD! LET'S GO THERE!



NO! OUR KINSMEN THERE ARE BRUTAL AND UNSOCIAL.

SO, NEVER GO TO THE TOWN! YOU'LL BE FINISHED!



If his relatives remain attached to a man with unchanging love, it will be a source of ever-increasing wealth.

BALIVARDHA CONCLUDES THE STORY THUS.

SO, ONE MUST LIVE IN A PLACE WHERE HE BELONGS TO.

AND GO AND FIGHT WITH ALL INTRUDERS!



RECOVER POSSESSION OF YOUR HOUSE. GO! THAT'S MY ADVICE.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR VALUABLE ADVICE. LET ME TAKE LEAVE OF YOU, MY DEAR FRIEND!



VISHNU SARMA CONCLUDES THE FOURTH PART OF PANCHATANTRA 'LABDHANASA' THUS.

YOU NOW SEE, MY DEAR PRINCES, HOW KRAKACHA THE CROCODILE, BECAUSE OF HIS FOLLY, LOST HIS ADVANTAGE...



LOST EVERYTHING HE HAD, LISTENING TO HIS WIFE'S WRONG ADVICE...



LOST HIS VALUABLE FRIENDSHIP WITH BALIVARDHA THE MONKEY...



LOST HIS WIFE IN THE PROCESS AND ENDED UP LOSING HIS ONE AND ONLY ABODE TO AN ENEMY TOO.



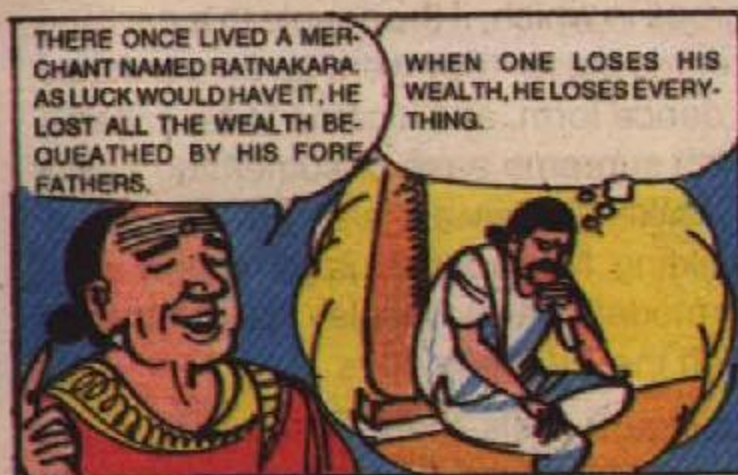
BUT GOOD SENSE PREVAILED AT LAST BECAUSE HE LISTENED TO BALIVARDHA.



HE RETURNED TO HIS HOUSE AND KILLED THE INTRUDER TO LIVE HAPPILY THEREAFTER.



**The strong - minded will not swoon when everything is lost – just as the elephant stands firm even when it is wounded by a shower of arrows.**



**One should fear the deceitful who put on a sweet smile on their face, but have no love in their heart.**

## Where cats and cakes don't walk!

The annual exams were fast approaching. Dinesh Shetty one evening went to his friend Sudhir Bhatt (of Mangalore) to clear some doubts. He was not available, and Dinesh had to go back disappointed. He was angry with his friend, for taking his exams lightly. The next day, when they met in school to collect their hall tickets, Dinesh asked him where he had been the previous evening. Very casually, Sudhir replied that he had gone for a movie. Dinesh was horrified. Sudhir could spare time for a movie, with the exams just a week away? "My dear friend, don't think you'll have a cakewalk. Mind you, these are Board exams!" Saying this, he went away hurriedly. What's all this about the cake taking a walk? Sudhir wondered. Could Dinesh have meant catwalk? He was not sure of its meaning, too. There was once a custom among American Negroes in which, if the couple in a dancing contest were to take most intricate or eccentric steps, they were given a cake as prize. Later, such steps developed into a dance form, and it came to be called a 'cakewalk', or something accomplished with supreme ease or something easily achieved. Like getting a cake for merely walking? *Catwalk* is a narrow footway high in the air, between two parts of a tall building. Nowadays, it is commonly used for the narrow raised platform along which models walk to display their clothes in a fashion show—something we often see on the TV these days.

Talking of cats, Matasundari of Chandigarh feels there is a catch in the expression '*see how the cat jumps*'. What is it? she asks. There is no cat-ch, as such. It simply means, see which of various alternatives will be effective or successful.





*(Prince Paris takes away Helen to Troy. The Greek warriors attack and destroy Troy and restore Helen to her husband. Ulysses, the great hero, now begins his return voyage to his own kingdom, Ithaka. He meets with several terrible dangers on the way. He narrowly escapes from the clutches of the one-eyed giant, Cyclop.)*

**U**lysses and his companions sailed away from the island of the Cyclop as fast as they could. Everybody thanked and congratulated Ulysses for his wit and wisdom. They ate heartily and took rest by turn, now that the dangerous island had been left far behind.

By and by they approached another island. It was beautiful, marked

by green hills and flower-bearing plants. But what amazed them was the fact that the island appeared to be floating on the waters, and not rooted to the ground under the sea.

Ulysses had heard that the god of Wind used such an island for his home. He anchored his ship on its shore and entered the lovely valley. Indeed, it was the home of the god of

## 6. ON THE ISLAND OF THE ENCHANTRESS



Wind. Ulysses showed great reverence to the god and the latter was much pleased. "O lord," said Ulysses, "long is the way we have to cover in order to reach our native land, Ithaka. Our voyage can be faster only if the wind favours me. But what actually happens is quite different. If some time the speed of my ship is hampered by a strong wind blowing from the opposite direction, at some other time the ship is damaged by violent storms and it takes us a long time to repair it. How can I reach my destination at this rate?"

The god of Wind understood his

problem and took pity on him. He gave him a bag made of hide which looked swelled. Its mouth was tied with a silver string. "Keep this with you. In this lie imprisoned all the evil winds which could have troubled you on your way. Now, your sailing should be smooth."

Tears of gratitude welled in the eyes of Ulysses. He thanked the god and bowed down to him. He and his men set sail again.

This time the sails of the ship remained puffed with favourable wind and the surface of the sea was so calm that the ship almost glided over it.

At last came a day when the land of Ithaka could be seen on the not-too-distant horizon. The companions of Ulysses gave out hurrahs and clapped their hands and danced with joy. Ulysses was no less happy. But he was tired. He had not slept for many days and nights. "My friends, remain alert. I would like to feel fresh when I step on our land," he said as he lay down for a peaceful sleep.

He did not know for how long he had slept. But it was a very sound sleep that he had. However, it came to an end when he was jolted out of his bed. He looked, wide-eyed, with



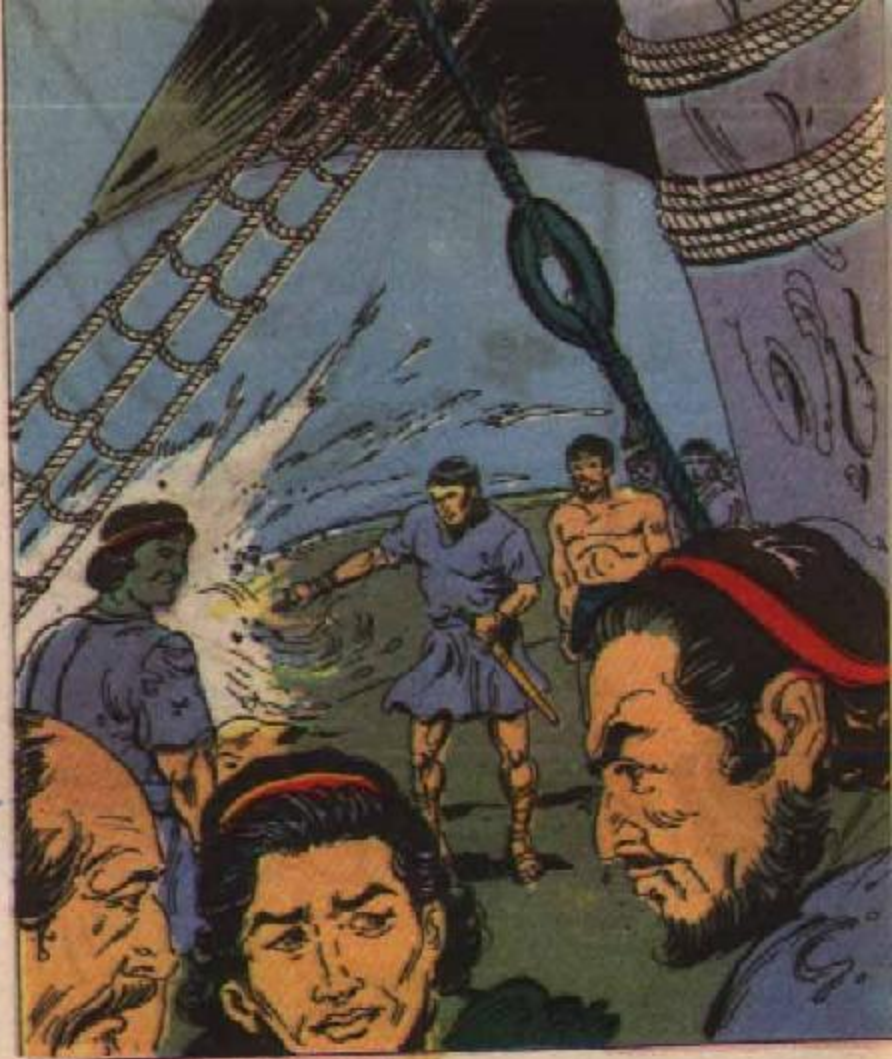
surprise. A strong wind was carrying the ship back into the sea at great speed. The sky was overcast and a dark storm was raging.

How could this happen? He looked for the bag given to him by the god of Wind. He found it had been emptied, and the silver thread removed. His companions stood pale, trembling.

By and by Ulysses understood what had happened. When he fell asleep, his companions had decided to open the bag, sure that it was filled with precious jewels. They did not wish to return to their homes empty-handed.

Once the evil winds were released, the ship was thrown into a tumult, with the winds pushing it this way and that. It sped away from the shores of Ithaka, back towards the floating island of the god of Wind.

Ulysses was greatly agitated, but he controlled himself, knowing full well that lamenting their fate was of no use. When the storm subsided, he entered the island and met the god and told him all that had happened and appealed to him to help him once again. But the god turned a deaf ear to him, saying he would not like to help an irresponsible fellow



like him!

Broken with disappointment, they sailed again, proceeding towards Ithaka at the usual speed. After a couple of days, they located another island. They needed help to repair their ship and they also wanted to collect sufficient food, as this time the voyage to Ithaka was bound to take a much longer time. But they did not know whether the people of that island were favourably disposed or hostile towards strangers. It was decided that one of his courageous companions, Eurylochus, would lead a group of twenty men into the island, while Ulysses waited on the





ship with the rest of his men.

Eurylochus and his friends soon saw a castle at the centre of the small island. A number of lions and wolves moved about before the gate. As soon as these beasts saw the strangers, they came running towards them. The men were scared. There was no time for them to escape. But to their pleasant surprise, the beasts behaved like pet dogs. They smelled them, licked them, and gave out soft, endearing growls.

The group advanced towards the castle. The gate opened and a beautiful damsel smiled at them and bade them to go in.

"This lady does not even know who we are. Yet she is ready to lead us right into the castle. What can be her motive?" wondered Eurylochus. He let his followers enter the castle, but himself stepped back. He peeped through a small opening on the wall. The lady obviously proved so charming to his followers that they did not miss their leader, they did not stop to find out why he refrained from responding to the lady's invitation.

The lady made the followers of Eurylochus comfortable in their chairs around a table and spread out before them dishes of delicious food and drink. But she put drops of a liquid from a tiny bottle on the items.

No sooner had the followers of Eurylochus begun eating, than something most unexpected happened. They turned into swine.

Eurylochus ran away and reported the matter to Ulysses. Seething with wrath, Ulysses armed with his sword, stepped onto the island and reached the castle and knocked on its door. The door opened and the smiling lady beckoned him to come in. He entered the castle, but at once he unsheathed his sword and raised it as if to strike her.

"Please stop! Should this be your



conduct towards your kind hostess?" the lady demanded.

"You're not kind but cruel. You're an enchantress who turned my trustful companions into swine. You deserve no mercy from me unless you give my companions their humanity back!" shouted Ulysses in a threatening tone and with a menacing gesture.

"Who but Ulysses can threaten me like this!" said the lady calmly. "I had been informed by a godly voice that you'll be passing by my island. Put your sword in your sheath and I'll do as you say."

"Do you swear to be truthful?" asked Ulysses.

"I swear," said the enchantress, whose name was Circe.

Circe led Ulysses to her swinepens where his companions were feeding on acorns. At first Ulysses could not believe his eyes. "Aren't you deceiving me? Are these my

companions?" he asked Circe. He then called out one of his men by his name. At once, one of the animals came jumping towards him and behaved like his pet. He called out another name. Another animal responded in the same way.

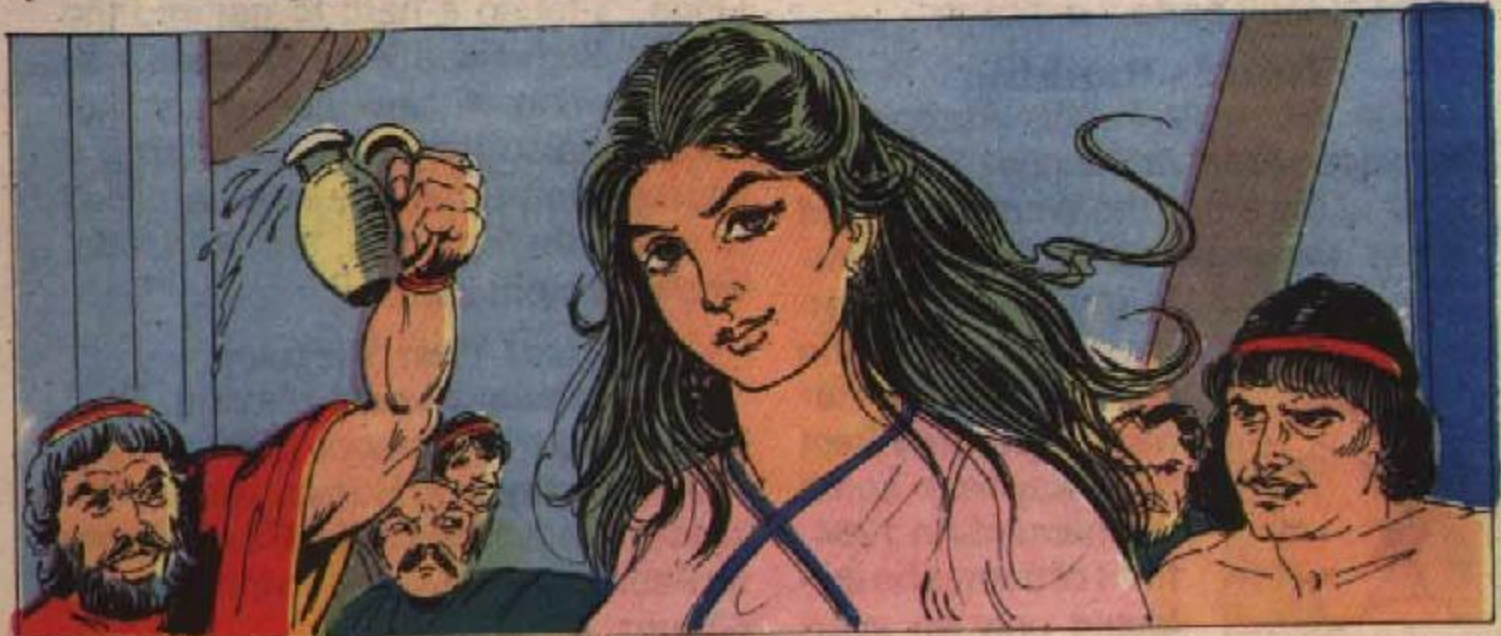
Ulysses marvelled at the situation. "O Enchantress! I command you to change them into the men they really are!" he said loudly.

Circe touched each one of the animals with her magic wand. The swine turned into men again.

Circe promised not to play any trick with them. Ulysses believed her. He and all his men passed their days in Circe's castle, happily, for a whole year.

But then for how long can they remain forgetful of their names? At the end of a year they requested Circe to let them go, and she consented.

(To continue)



# SPORTS SNIPPETS

## No. 1 Footballer

Striker Romario, who steered the Brazilian team to win the World Cup in 1994, was named the footballer of the year by the International Football Federation—FIFA. At a ceremony in Lisbon on January 30, Romario de Souza Faria (his full name) was presented with the gold-plated soccer ball. This short-

statured 29-year-old 'forward' was responsible for Brazil's victory in July last year, after a 24-year wait to win the championship for the fourth time.

Asked about the success of his team, he said: "Brazilians were once slaves, and slaves don't have any music, only dance. It's our dance steps that gave us the technique of our play." Perhaps this is the secret of their perfect dribbling.



## Tennis Ranking

The Women's Tennis Association has placed Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain at the top of the Women's World Tennis rankings. Steffi Graf of Germany has been

moved down to the second position. Her back injury had kept her away from some tournaments in 1994. In 11 of them, she collected only an aver-



age of 289 points, while Arantxa had nearly 308 points from 17 tournaments. Mary Pierce of France, who beat Arantxa in the Australian Open in January, was placed third with 196 points. Incidentally, Mary



is the first woman from France to win the Australian Open and the first French woman to win a Grand Slam title since Francoise Durr's victory in the French Open in 1967.




## Woman Referee

For the first time, a men's international soccer had a woman referee, when 36-year-old Linda Black of New Zealand officiated in a game between New Zealand and Denmark in Wellington, New Zealand, on January 23. "I'm relieved, it's all over!" remarked Linda. "I found it hard to get into the game." Both sides were satisfied with her umpiring. A New Zealand striker once handled the ball while putting it into the Danish goal. The linesman failed to notice the foul play, but not Linda, who was more alert.

## First Test Victory

Zimbabwe began playing Test Cricket only in October 1992. In the 11th Test played in Harare against Pakistan, it registered its first Test victory on February 4. It won by an innings and 64 runs.

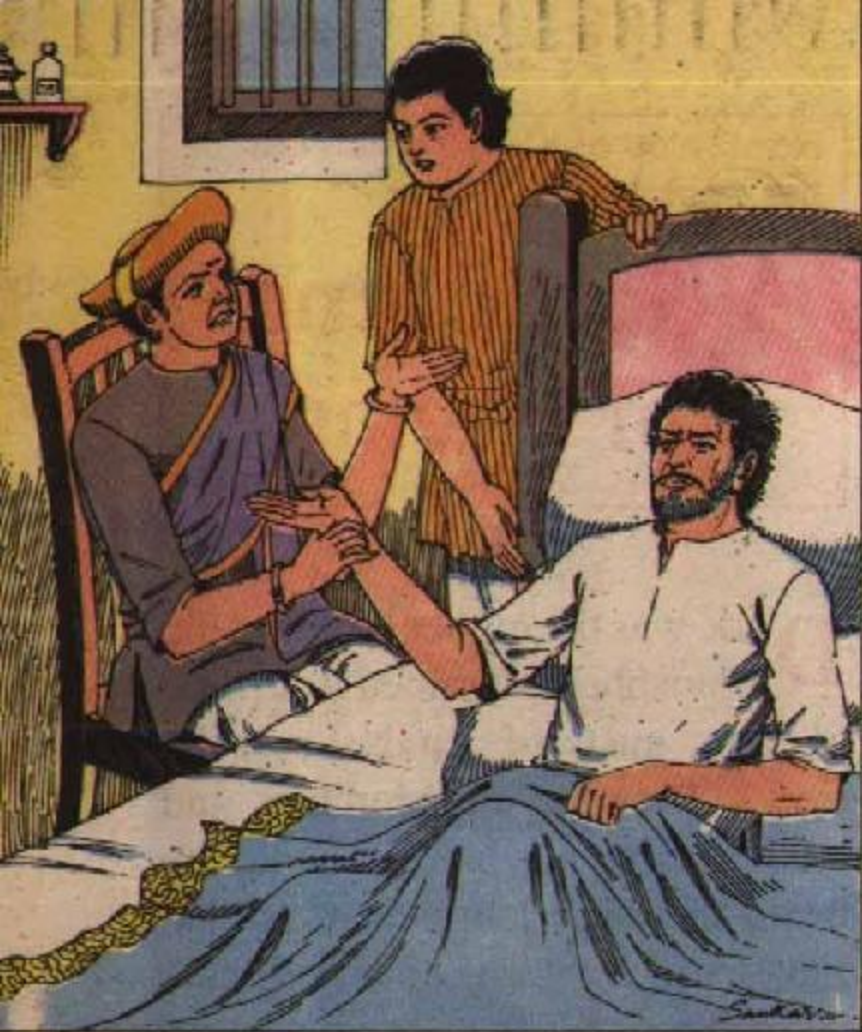


New Tales of King Vikram and  
the Vampire

## A Soft Corner for Enemy

**D**ark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time; gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King! You seem to be making untiring efforts and without respite as if you wish to achieve something. I pity you. Instead of enjoying comfortable sleep on a cozy bed, you're still coming after me. I admire your determination. There are some people who, with similar determination, will succeed in their mission. But they will not know how to reap benefits from such success. We've



an example of this in Gnanadeep. Listen to his story.” The vampire then began his narration.

Pradeep and his only son, Gnanadeep, hailed from Suryanagar. Both of them were gentlemen and kind-hearted and went to the help of anybody in distress. Gnanadeep was very much attached to his father. He was ready to sacrifice even his life for the sake of Pradeep, who was getting old and older, with a failing health. One day, he suffered acute chest pain, and the family doctor was sent for. He examined Pradeep thoroughly and said, “Remember, sir, you’re getting old. It’s time you

took complete rest. Entrust the family affairs to your son. You shouldn’t exert or unnecessarily worry.”

Pradeep accepted the doctor’s advice and asked son Gnanadeep to look after the family affairs, and took complete rest. A week after Gnanadeep took over the responsibility, he had a visitor in Jakku. “I’m your cousin, son of your father’s elder brother. I’m sorry to say this, but your father had cheated my father and the family now finds itself on the streets. I’ve been wandering all these days and years. There’s none to give me food, nor do I have a place to stay. So, I’ve decided to stay with you here.”

Gnanadeep could not believe his ears. “You mean to say that my father broke up your family? Impossible! Never! He wouldn’t behave that way even to his enemies. I know my father very well. He isn’t that type of a man. Why, he wouldn’t even harm the tiny ant.”

“If you don’t believe me, come, we’ll go and ask your father himself,” said Jakku.

“No, Jakku,” cautioned Gnanadeep. “My father has a weak heart. If he were to hear anything like this, he might not survive the shock. If you go and tell him anything, that

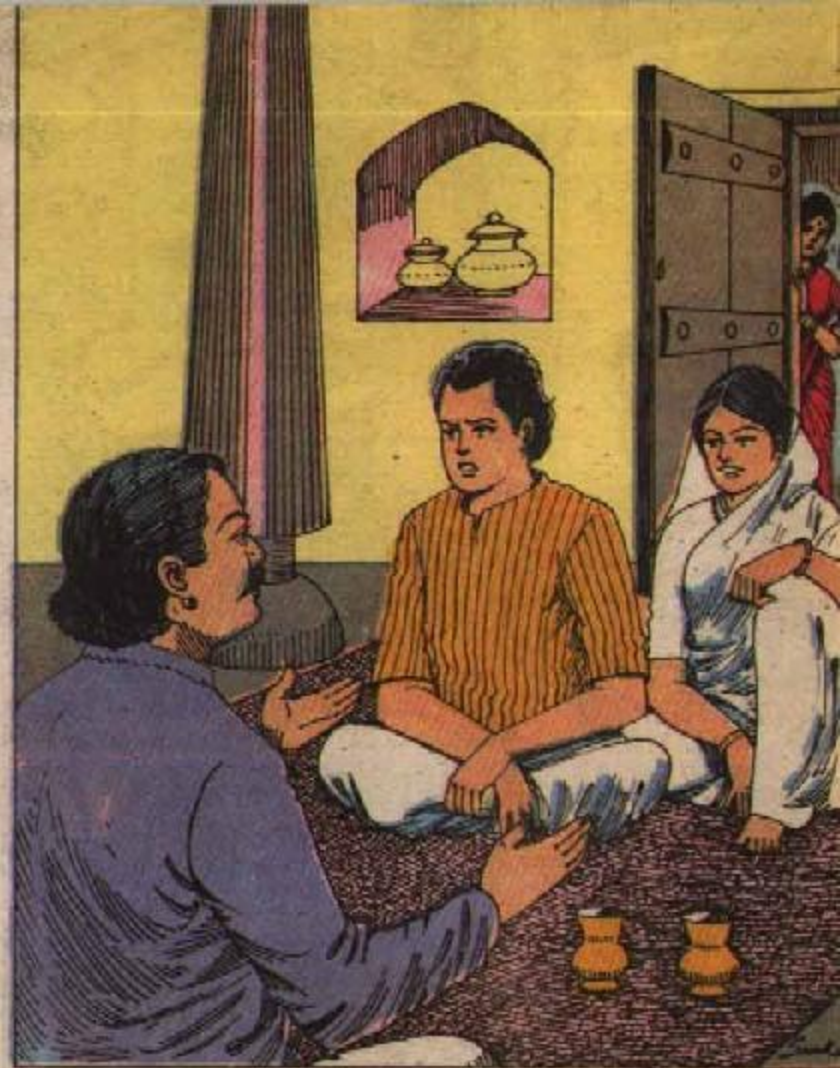


would upset him and he would get tensed up. That may even endanger his life. What I shall do is, let me check with our relations. And if they say that what you have said is true and would vouchsafe so in writing, I shall see what I can do for you. You may stay back, but on one condition, that you won't go anywhere near my father or speak to him till I return."

"Yes, I shall abide by your instruction. I won't talk to your father," Jakku assured his cousin. "You may go and meet whichever relative you wish to and come back."

Gnanadeep immediately set out to meet his relatives and to verify whether what Jakku had claimed was true or not. None of them had anything to say against Pradeep. "We haven't met a more honest man than your father," they all vouchsafed for the old man's integrity.

When Gnanadeep returned home, he was shocked to see his father lying dead. He could not bear the sight. Apparently, Jakku had met his ailing father and talked to him about the family affairs which might have brought about his end. Jakku had clearly disregarded his request and direction. He was very angry with Jakku. He drove him away.



"Whoever I met had only bad things to say about you and your father. They say you both were cruel to them. I can forget all that. I wanted to help you by giving you a job here. But what I told you not to do, you went about doing the same thing against my directions, and you brought about the death of my father. I don't want to see your face any longer. Get out of the place!" he shouted at Jakku, sounding a warning note.

Somehow, the passing away of his father upset Gnanadeep very much. His mother tried her best to console him. She thought her son would get over his melancholy if he





were to marry. Gnanadeep accepted her advice and agreed to get married. Mother and son called on the zamindar of the village who had a daughter of marriageable age. "We have heard a lot about your family from your cousin Jakku," said the zamindar. "We don't need any other recommendation. We know Jakku very well."

Without a moment's thought Gnanadeep said, "I don't want to consider the proposal." He got up to go away, making it very clear to the zamindar that he would have nothing to do with Jakku and did not want to attach any value to his cousin's rec-

ommendation or certificate. Ultimately, he managed to marry a girl from a family who did not know Jakku. He did not even invite him to his wedding, nor did he attend Jakku's marriage though he had invited Gnanadeep and his mother.

Almost a year went by after his wedding. One day he heard that a piece of land adjacent to their house was to be sold away. He was keen to acquire that land. Unfortunately, he did not have enough money to buy it. He was short by a thousand coins. He thought of borrowing money from his friends. Before he went out to meet them, a trader from the town reached the village. "The crop on your farm looks good," he told Gnanadeep. "I would like to buy it. I can give you double the current market price."

Gnanadeep heaved a great sigh of relief. Now he would not have to borrow money from anyone. "But who told you about my crop?" he asked the trader inquisitively.

"Why, your cousin Jakku!" said the merchant. "In fact, he also told me that you're very honest in your dealings and that you won't cheat in your transactions."

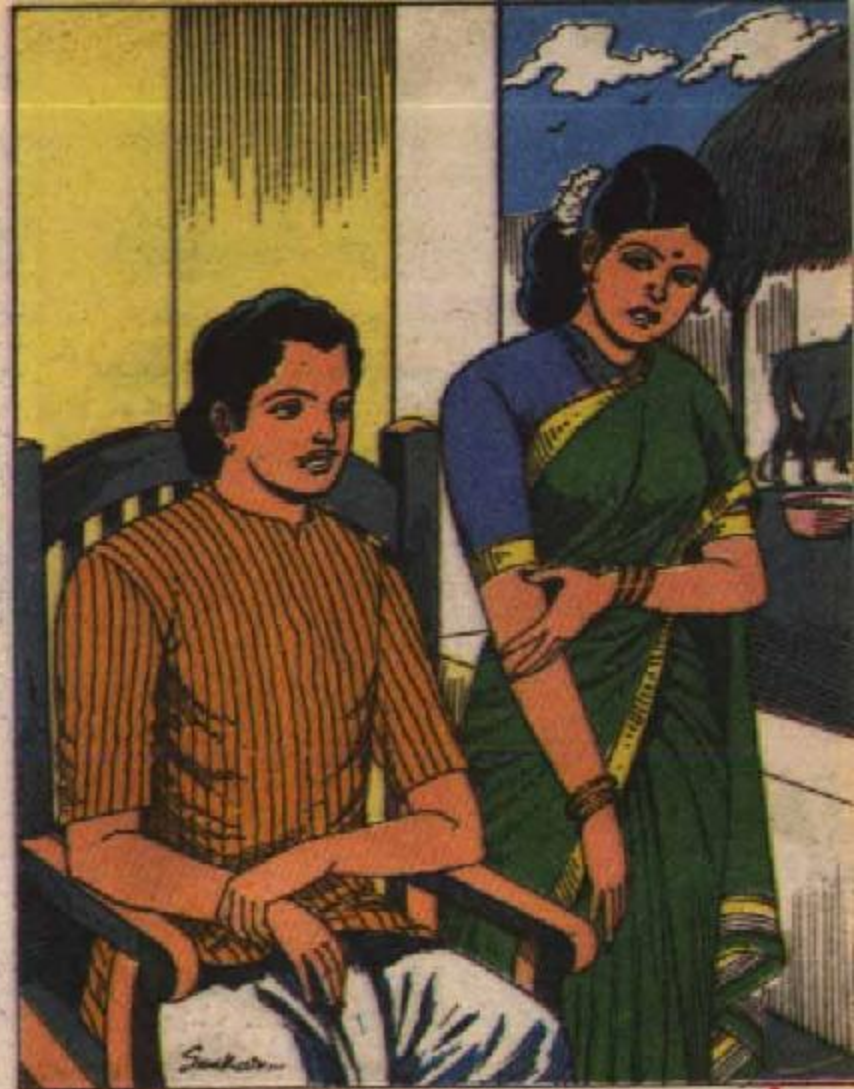
Gnanadeep's face suddenly contorted. He sent back the merchant



saying he did not wish to strike any deal with him. His wife was listening to their conversation and she was shocked when her husband sent back the trader empty-handed. "What has happened to you?" she asked of Gnanadeep. "He was offering a good price for the crop. Your cousin must be repenting his act of indiscretion in talking to your father. That's why he now goes about trying to help us. You must forget the past and not nourish any thought of vengeance. Why should you reject his offer of help? We alone are the losers!" She tried to convince him of the futility of harbouring any ill will against Jakku any more.

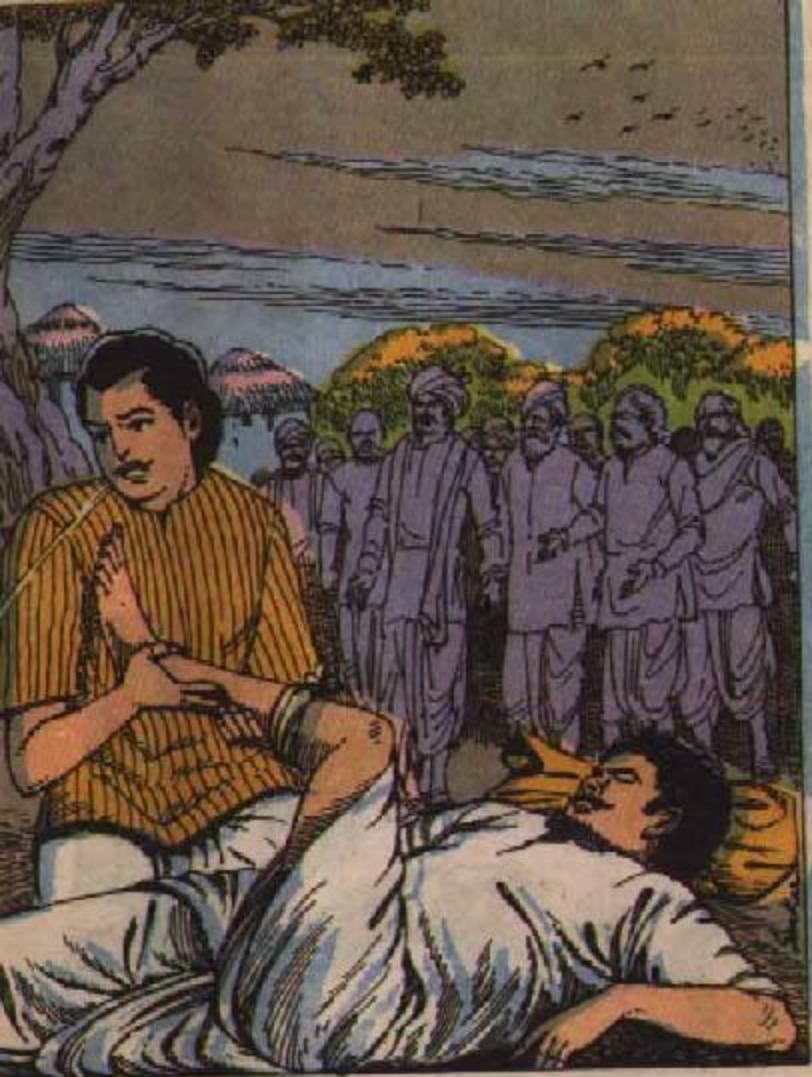
"No, Jakku is my enemy number one!" said Gnanadeep. "He was responsible for my father's death. I can't depend on his word and allow myself to be cheated and sustain any loss. If I don't accept his word, the loss will only be little and it won't affect me. But I won't be able to survive any heavy loss."

Gnanadeep was a respected figure in Suryanagar. But some people did not approve of his attitude towards his cousin Jakku. They tried to advise him. "After all, he's only doing good to you," they reminded Gnanadeep. "Why should you be



angry with him? Don't you think you should take advantage of his attitude towards you?"

They found him adamant. Some of them used this to their own benefit. They cheated him. His wife soon realised that Gnanadeep had become an easy prey to these cunning men. She took courage in warning him. He brushed aside her advice. "I know who's cheating me and how. And as they know that I am aware of all that's happening, they are not able to cheat me that much. I can suffer small losses and that doesn't affect my business. Anyway, I won't have any faith in Jakku. You say



he's doing good to me? Never. There's no question of patching up with Jakku. He's my sworn enemy. Don't talk any more to me about him!" Gnanadeep cautioned her.

After that, his wife did not even utter the name of Jakku to him. A few days later, something unexpected happened. Jakku was in Suryanagar for some work. As he was walking through the village, a snake bit him, and he swooned and fell down. Soon people gathered around him. Some suggested that a doctor should be brought to examine him; some wanted a poison-healer to be called in. There

was no dearth of suggestions and advice; only, no one went forward to render any help to Jakku.

Came Gnanadeep that way. Someone went up to him and told him about the mishap to his cousin. He rushed to where Jakku was lying. He tore a piece of cloth from his *dhoti* and tied a knot above where the snake had bitten him. He then sucked at the wound and spat out the poison. He did this thrice or four times. By then Jakku opened his eyes, came out of his swoon, and sat up, only to see Gnanadeep himself falling down from the effect of the poison. A doctor who had reached the place asked the men to help both Gnanadeep and Jakku walk up to his house, where he treated them till the two were back to normal.

Some people were happy to see that Gnanadeep had a change of heart and had gone to the rescue of his cousin. Some others said Gnanadeep was a good man even otherwise and he would have saved even if the victim had been someone else. However, Jakku was certain that it was Gnanadeep who saved him. "You're such a good person!" said Jakku as they walked out of the doctor's house. "I was responsible for your father's death. Naturally,

you took me to be your enemy, yet you were willing to save me from death. I bow before your good-naturedness."

"You'll continue to be my enemy, Jakku," remarked Gnanadeep sternly. "I won't believe in anything that you say. I can't have any faith in you." He then went his way.

The vampire concluded the story thus and turned to Vikramaditya. "O King! Gnanadeep considered Jakku as his mortal enemy because he believed his cousin had caused his father's death, didn't he? If that was the case, then why did he go to Jakku's rescue? Was it right on his part to do so? He could have let him die rather than sacrifice his own life. Why didn't he do so? If you know the answers to these questions and still decide to keep silent, beware, your head will be blown to pieces!"

The king did not take any time to reply the vampire. "By nature

Gnanadeep was honest and a man of character. He had seen the world and had a wide knowledge. That's why he didn't have any faith in Jakku, whom he considered his enemy. He once had confidence in his cousin, but had to rue later for reposing that confidence in him. He had warned Jakku not to remind his ailing father of the past. But Jakku didn't heed his advice. Naturally, he didn't have any faith in Jakku afterwards. At the same time, he didn't walk out on Jakku when he found his life in danger. For him, even an enemy deserved to be saved from danger. That was his character. And he was ready to sacrifice his own life in saving his cousin from death."

The vampire realised that the king had outwitted him once again. He flew back to the ancient tree, carrying the corpse with him. Vikramaditya drew his sword and went after the vampire.



## Sweden's Social Democrats

Imagine this situation: father goes for work; mother also goes for work. Their child falls ill. Who will look after the child? There may be a few answers to this question, but Sweden had thought of the best solution to such a problem: the father remains at home to tend his sick child, and he gets paid by the government. No wonder, Sweden has been hailed as a welfare state. At every stage of human life – from babies to aged persons – the government had gone to their help to give them a decent life. Like the doles or money the state paid to those who could not find jobs.

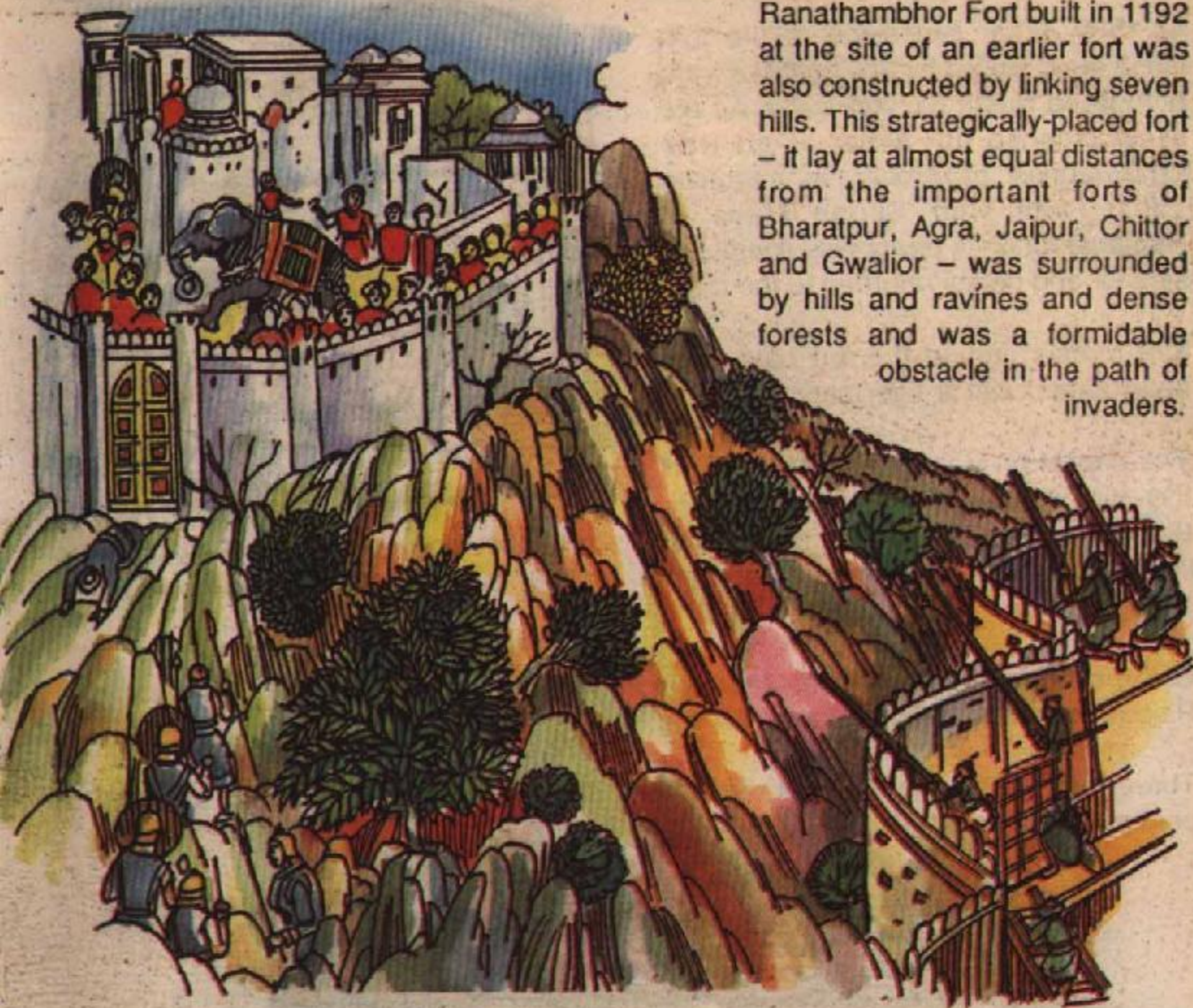
How was this possible? you may wonder. More than 60 years ago – in 1932 to be exact – the Social Democratic Party came to power and except for six years, it has ruled the country all through. Once the party consolidated its position and ensured its stability, it went about bringing in reforms. The government allowed private parties to start industries which resulted in employment to a large number of people. Taxes were raised so that the government had enough money to introduce welfare schemes for all sections of people. The government encouraged its own employees in the industrial sector to form trade unions. There was all round prosperity and people were satisfied and happy.

The Conservative and Liberal parties, however, felt that the leftist government was spending too much on

welfare schemes. In 1986, Prime Minister Olaf Palme was assassinated, and Mr. Ingvar Carlsson took over as leader of the Social Democrats, who were defeated in the 1991 elections. The right-wing conservative-liberal coalition, led by Mr. Carl Bildt, cut back several welfare schemes and government's participation in industry. People were agitated, especially because there was widespread unemployment. They longed for the return of the Social Democratic Party. In the September 1994 elections, the Party was returned to power and once again Mr. Carlsson was chosen Prime Minister.

Incidentally, Sweden is a monarchy, but the king takes no part in the government.





Ranathambhor Fort built in 1192 at the site of an earlier fort was also constructed by linking seven hills. This strategically-placed fort – it lay at almost equal distances from the important forts of Bharatpur, Agra, Jaipur, Chittor and Gwalior – was surrounded by hills and ravines and dense forests and was a formidable obstacle in the path of invaders.

**Mughal soldiers firing from behind a makeshift fort (right), erected outside Ranathambhor (left).**

It was attacked thirteen times between 1209 and 1569. During the time of Hammir Deva, a rebel commander of Alauddin Khalji sought and was granted asylum at the fort. Alauddin's forces came to take the fort and were repulsed. Alauddin himself led the second attack in 1301. This time Hammir was betrayed by two of his ministers and the fort fell due to their treachery. Hammir was killed in the battle and the fugitive general, Muhammad Shah was captured and executed.

In 1569 Akbar laid siege to the fort. Huge guns, pulled by 200 bullocks were brought to break the fort walls. As the siege dragged on, Akbar asked Raja Bhagwandas of Amber to negotiate peace with Rao Surjan Hada of Ranathambhor. A treaty was eventually signed and peace returned to the area.

The forests around the fort have now been turned into a tiger sanctuary.

The capital of Marwar was Mandor. In the 15th century, the Rathor chieftain, Rao Jodha decided to shift the capital to a hill about nine kilometres further away. He founded the city named after him — Jodhpur and built the fort, Mehrangarh in 1459.

Unlike other forts in the region, Mehrangarh fort was invaded more often by neighbouring Rajput kings and chieftains than by the Mughals and Afghans.

Three huge guns, the KILKILA, SHAMBHUBAAN and GHAZIKHAN are still kept in perfect condition in the fort.



Mehrangarh, Jodhpur



## FORTS OF INDIA – 3

### THE RAJPUT BASTIONS – I

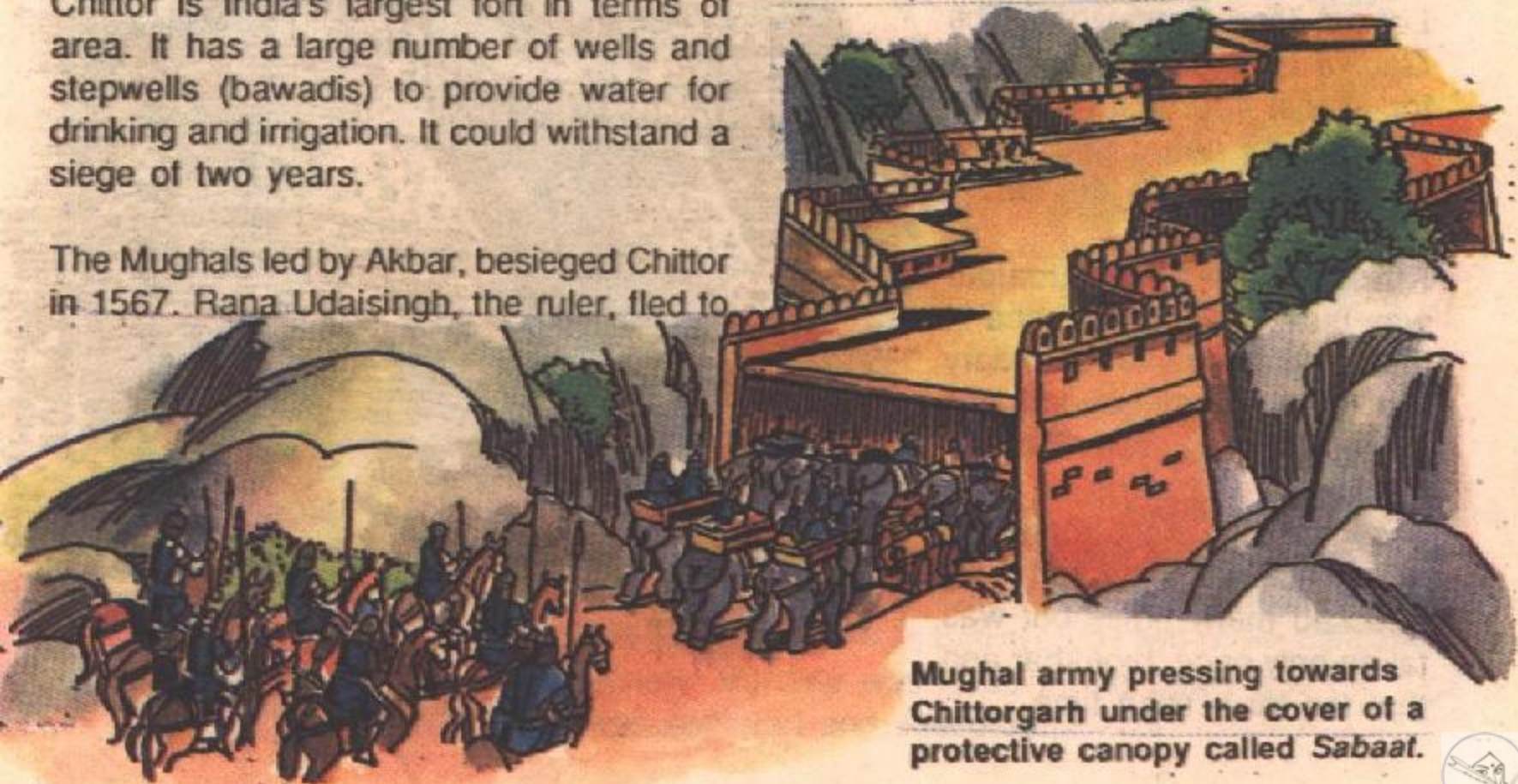
**C**HITRAKOOT fort was built by Chitrangad Mori in the seventh century.

A hundred years later the famous Guhil chieftain, Bappa Rawal made it his base and called it Chittor.

His descendants, the Sisodias ruled Chittor for nearly 800 years. The 'Tower of Victory', *Vijaya Stambha* we see in the fort was built by Rana Kumbha to commemorate his victory over the Sultan of Malwa in 1458. The 9-storeyed tower is 36 m high and took almost ten years to build.

Chittor is India's largest fort in terms of area. It has a large number of wells and stepwells (bawadis) to provide water for drinking and irrigation. It could withstand a siege of two years.

The Mughals led by Akbar, besieged Chittor in 1567. Rana Udaisingh, the ruler, fled to



Mughal army pressing towards Chittorgarh under the cover of a protective canopy called *Sabaaf*.



Ram Pol Gate, Chittorgarh

They became nomads and came to be called *Gadiya Lohars* (cart-ironsmiths). The *Gadiya Lohars* kept their vow for almost 400 years till 1955 when they were led back ceremoniously into the fort.

Kumbhalgarh near Udaipur was built by Rana Kumbha in 1485. Its massive boundary wall runs across several hills in the region. The 7-metre broad ramparts can accommodate eight horsemen riding abreast. The fort was attacked many times but was taken only once, by Akbar and that too for a short time.

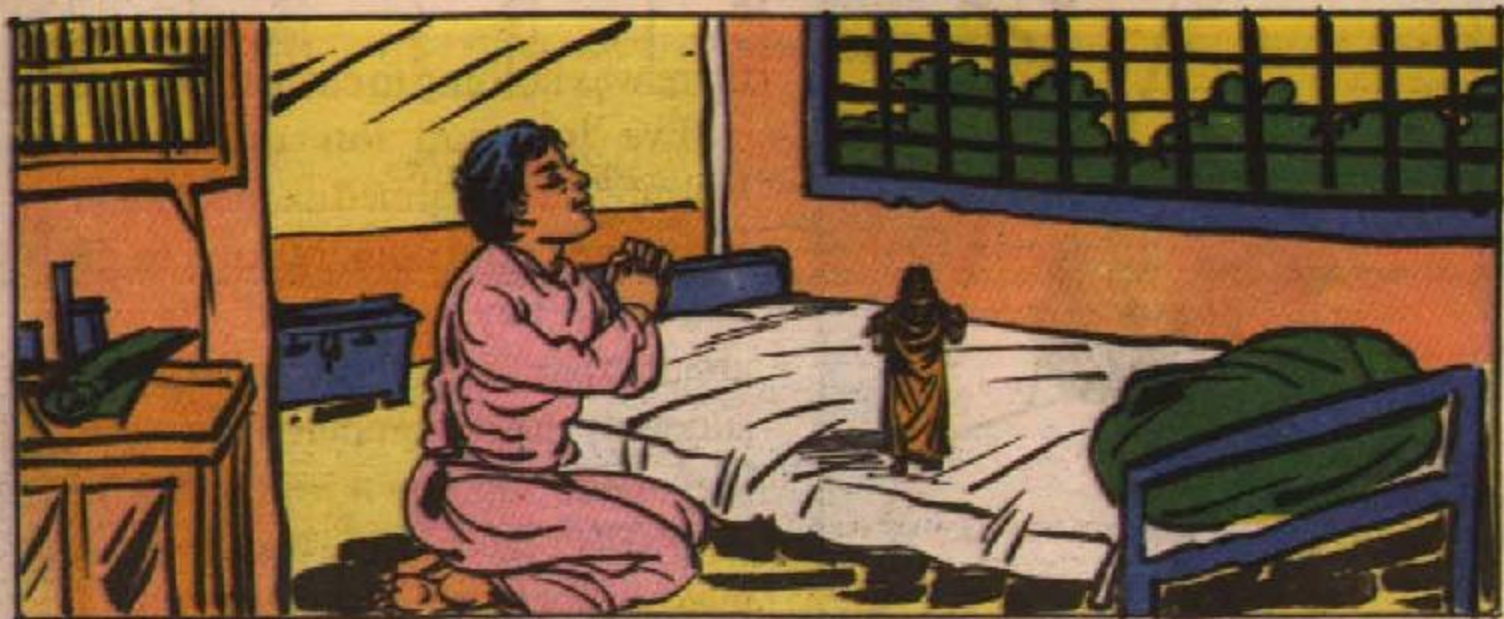
the Aravalli hills, leaving his commanders, Jaimal and Patta in charge.

Jaimal and his men put up a heroic defence and the Mughals could make no headway. Then one day almost four months after the siege had begun, a stray musket shot hit Jaimal, mortally wounding him. His death unnerved his men and the Mughals pressed on to victory.

Rana Udaisingh did not surrender despite the loss of his fort. His son, Pratap and some of his followers took an oath to give up the comforts of life till the fort was recaptured. Among these die-hards there was a group of ironsmiths – *Lohars*. They vowed to live in their carts till they could return to Chittor.



Boundary wall, Kumbhalgarh



Tales From Many Lands (Bulgaria)

## HOW MUCH DOES ONE NEED?

**L**ong ago, in a small hamlet, there lived a poor shoemaker. Though he worked hard, he could barely earn enough for one square meal a day. He was indeed in a dilemma. What should he do? Soon a time would come when there wouldn't be anything in the house to eat. As he was thus pondering, he remembered the words of his grandfather when he was a mere boy.

"My child," the wise old man had said years ago, handing over a small idol to him, "whenever you face difficulties in life, never get disheartened. Instead pray to this idol and have faith in His capacity to help you. All will be well with you."

"Why not give a trial to my grandpa's advice?" thought the poor

shoemaker.

So, before going to bed that night, he knelt before the little idol and prayed with folded hands. Certainly, sincere and earnest were his prayers, for, they touched the good idol's heart. When he opened his eyes, there lay on his cot a small earthen pot.

"Good shoemaker," addressed a voice, "this pot is the reward for your prayer. In it you will find a gold coin. The moment you pick it up, another coin will take its place."

The poor man's joy knew no bounds. With a beaming face he reached for the vessel.

"Wait!" continued the invisible speaker. "Mind you, the pot should not touch water. If it does, it will melt and so will the coins. Secondly,



on no account should you spend the money until you have thrown the pot into the river. For, if you spend, the vessel will change into stone and the coins you would have gathered, into tiny pebbles. Thirdly, don't take more than what you can spend in a lifetime, I mean a reasonably happy lifetime and not a greedy one."

The delighted shoemaker lost no time in beginning to produce coin after coin from the magic pot. He went on all night long and the following day. Not a wink of sleep did he have nor a morsel of food, till he had gathered one sackful of the gold pieces. He was tired and hungry, but

there was nothing to eat in the house.

'I've lots and lots of money! Hurrah!' he exclaimed excitedly and, taking one gold coin, hurried to the market to buy some food. He was about to pay to the shopkeeper when, suddenly, he remembered the warning of the unknown voice. So, he returned home, putting back the coin into his pocket and buying nothing, lest the pot turned into a stone and the coins into pebbles.

'I'll gather just one more bag full of gold pieces, and then will I surely throw this wonderful vessel into the river,' he assured himself.

So, he borrowed some bread from his good neighbour that day and worked continuously to fill the second bag. It was not before long when that, too, was full. But his hunger did not stop growing and his hands trembled and his steps faltered out of utter fatigue. Yet, he did not spend any of his money. Instead, he begged for alms in order to support himself.

Thus, day after day, the poor shoemaker went on gathering wealth and more wealth and grew richer and richer. Perhaps he had already become the richest man in the whole kingdom. Many times, with a satisfied and happy look, he trudged to



the river intending to throw the vessel into it. But by the time he reached its bank he would have decided to put it off.

'Just one more sackful of gold, and then into the river goes this magic pot!' he promised himself. 'I can, of course, spend everything.'

But alas, it never did happen and never did the shoemaker spend a single coin out of the sacksful that filled every nook and corner of his house and even made their way to the thatched roof.

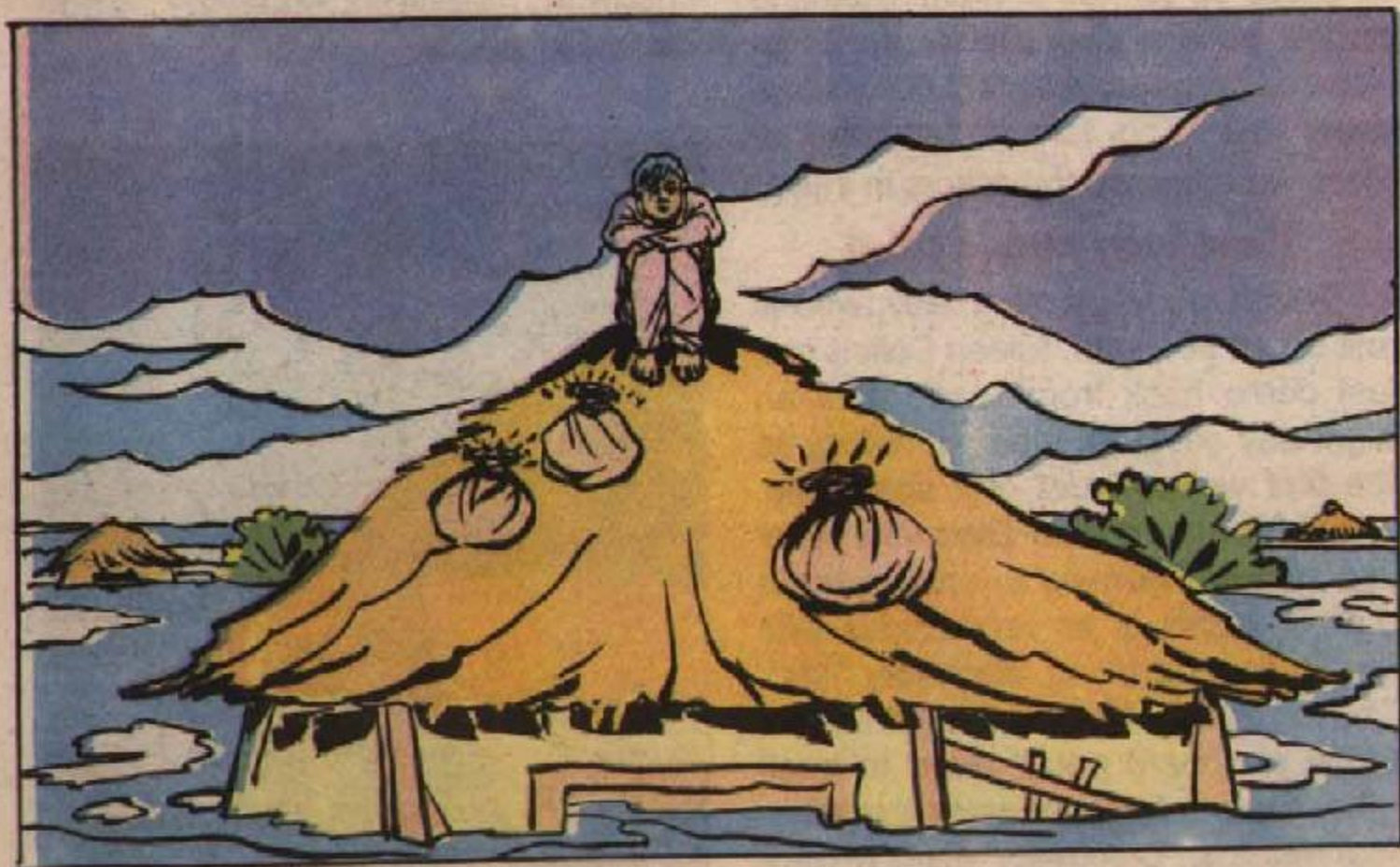
It so happened that one dark night, a great storm raged in the region. Rain fell in torrents, the river swelled

and flooded the slumbering hamlet. In the morning, when the waters receded, the shoemaker found himself stuck to the branch of a high tree in his courtyard. The mighty river had swept away his humble dwelling along with its kingly fortune.

In despair did the poor man lower himself from the tree. He sat under it and buried his head in his hands.

Alas, so much wealth had the shoemaker amassed that perhaps it would have lasted him seven lives and more. Yet how poorly did he live, without a morsel of food in his home!

— Retold by Anup Kishore Das



## NEWS FLASH

### Facelift for 'old lady'

Parisians call her the 'old lady'. 'She' is none other than the Eiffel Tower, which is now 106 years old. The Tower gets a fresh coat of paint once in seven or eight years; it is right now being painted for the 17th time since Gustave Alexandre Eiffel began constructing it in 1887 to mark the 100th anniversary of the French Revolution. The Tower is 1,050 ft. (320m) high. Gustave Eiffel is said to have paid incentive wages to make his workers agree to climb those heady heights. The present team of painters, who too will be paid more than what they normally earn, is expected to complete the work in about 15 to 20 months. By then, they would have used up some 50 tonnes of paint. Standing on the bank of river Seine, the Eiffel Tower attracts nearly 6,000,000 visitors every year. This famous landmark of Paris was opened for visitors in 1889.

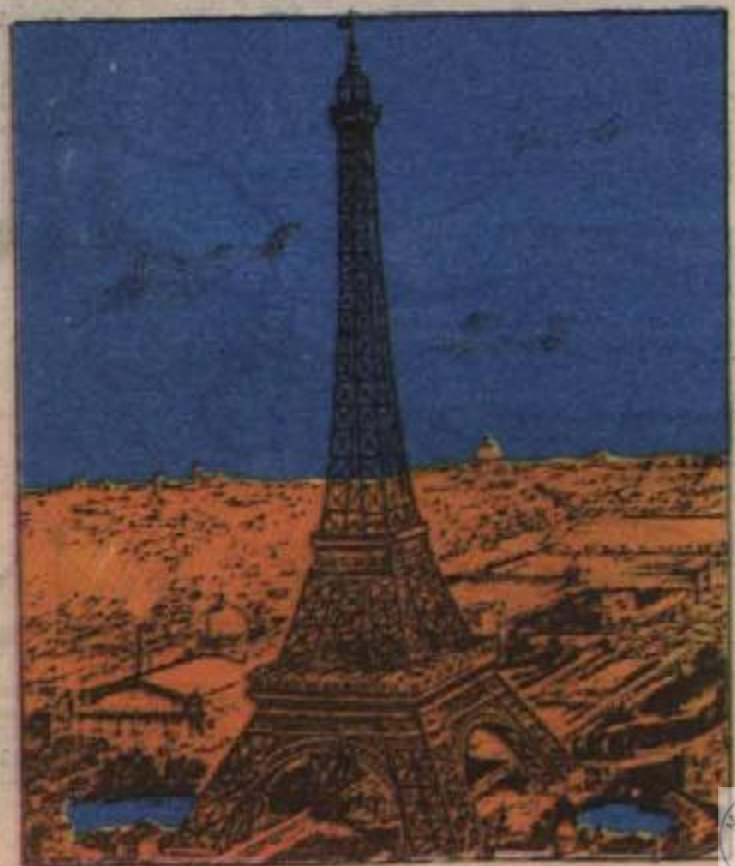
### First lady space pilot

This is about another lady, who is just about 38 years. Eileen Collins has just come back from space after an eight-day odyssey, creating history as the first woman pilot of a spaceship. The U.S. space shuttle "Discovery" went into orbit on February 3, and among its achievements is its rendezvous with the Russian orbiting laboratory "Mir". The two spaceships came so close that those on board could wave to each other. During its next voyage in another four months, "Discovery" plans to dock

with "Mir". Incidentally, when Eileen, as a teenager, expressed an ambition to become an astronaut, not many took her seriously.

### Woman officer on "Trishna"

Second Lieutenant Deepanita Das is another adventure-loving woman. She joined the Indian army in March 1994 and seven months later, found herself on board "Trishna", a yacht that set sail from Bombay to Singapore and back in four months time. Deepanita was the only woman in the 12 member crew, quite a few of whom were going on a sea voyage for the first time. "Trishna" returned from its 11,000 km voyage on February 1 after several adventures that took the crew to Maldives, Sri Lanka, the Andamans, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and finally Singapore.





## STORIES FROM MAHABHARATA

### The story so far:

The jealousies between the Kaurava and the Pandava princes increased from day to day. Duryodhana, the eldest of the Kauravas, was the ring-leader of a dastardly plot to kill the sons of Pandu.

The Pandavas, with their mother Kunti, were induced to pay a visit to the distant town of Varanasi. A house had been built there for their stay, constructed of inflammable materials. Thanks to the timely warning of Vidura, the king's counsellor, the five brothers and their mother escaped the fire through a secret passage and took refuge in the forests.

Whilst they are in the forests, Bhima meets Hidambhi, the sister of a man-eating giant.

**B**hima liked the grace, courtesy, and beauty of Hidambhi, but her proposal of marriage certainly startled him. Before he could reply, there was a terrific noise in the forest, as though a wild elephant was on the rampage.

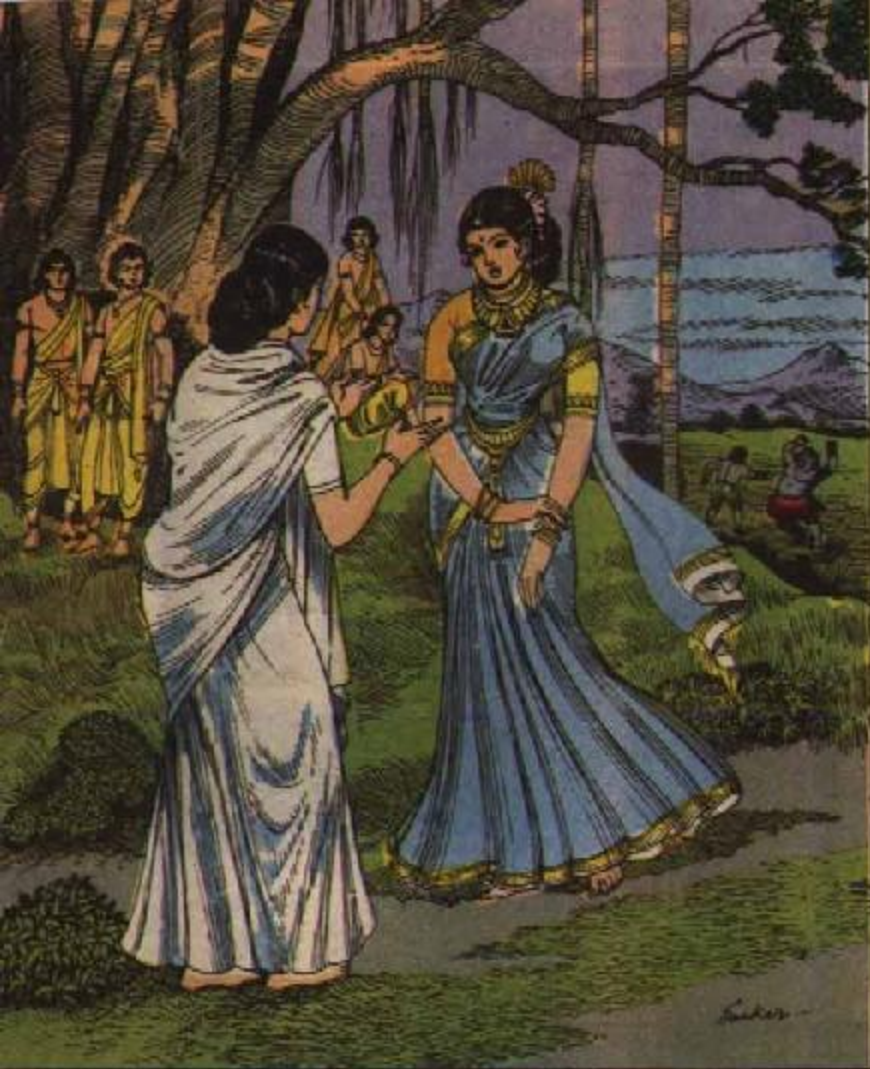
"It's my brother," Hidambhi cried in anguish. "Go away quickly; otherwise, he'll surely kill you and your

family."

Bhima just laughed. "I'm not scared of any giant, however big he be."

As he spoke, the giant came out of the forest, a fiendish brute, snarling like a wild animal. Bhima wasted no time in running to stop the giant, and they were soon locked in a deadly combat.

### 6. BHIMA AND THE DEMON



Each pulled out young trees for clubs, and although the giant towered over Bhima, he was not so agile, and Bhima soon had the giant bruised and bleeding all over.

But the noise they made awakened Bhima's mother and brothers.

The princes ran to the scene of the fight, ready to assist Bhima, but it was soon obvious that the giant was no match for Bhima's agility and strength. The ponderous giant tried and tried again to deal Bhima a killing blow with his club, but Bhima would nimbly dodge aside, then dash in and club the giant.

Meanwhile Kunti was puzzled at

the sight of Hidambika, "You must be a goddess of the forest with such rare beauty. But, tell me, who are you and why are you here?"

"Good mother," replied Hidambika, "I'm no goddess. I live in this forest with my brother who is now trying to kill your son. Believe me, I wished you no harm, and I wanted to save you from my fearsome brother."

"Have no fear, my child. Bhima is a great warrior," Kunti said. Just at that moment there was a mighty roar as Bhima struck the giant a tremendous blow on the head, which felled him lifeless on the ground.

When everyone had finished congratulating Bhima on his victory, Yudhishtira told them: "Let's not tarry here, for Duryodhana's men may be combing the forest. We must travel far before we're safe."

At this, Hidambika threw herself at Kunti's feet. "Please do not leave me. I've fallen in love with your son Bhima, and if he won't marry me, I'll kill myself."

Yudhishtira lifted up Hidambika. "Come with us. My brother will marry you."

And so the Pandavas, with Hidambika, journeyed through the forest. Bhima married Hidambika, and they lived together for a year, and



during that time Hidambhi gave birth to a son. He was named Ghatotkacha, because he did not have a single hair on his head.

Soon after Ghatotkacha was born, Hidambhi told Bhima: "I must leave you. When my son has grown to manhood, he'll serve you whenever you need him."

And so Hidambhi took leave of the Pandavas and returned to the forests with her son.

The Pandavas then decided to move further on, and in their journey suffered many hardships and overcame many a danger.

They met Vedavyasa on the way, from whom they received encouragement and wise counsel. He advised them to put on the garb of Brahmins, and go to the city of Ekachakra and live there in a certain Brahmin's house, till better days dawned.

In the city of Ekachakra, the Pandavas stayed in the guise of Brahmins, begging for their food in the streets.

One day, when the other brothers had gone to beg for alms, Bhima stayed with his mother, and they heard a loud wailing from the house of their Brahmin landlord. Thinking some calamity had befallen the



family, Kunti went inside the house to find out what was amiss.

The Brahmin and his wife could hardly speak. They were weeping, but in the end Kunti gathered that it had been decreed any one member of the family had to be sacrificed to a demon who lived in a cave on a nearby hill.

This demon did what he liked. The king was weak and unable to protect his people, and those who had tried to stand against the demon were killed.

The demon had been in the habit of indiscriminately killing and eating men, women, and children. The



citizens then begged him to stop this random killing, and it was agreed that once a week one villager would drive a bullock-cart laden with food to the demon's cave and the demon would make a feast of the food as well as the bullocks, and the driver. This week it was the turn of the landlord's family to go to the demon.

The Brahmin's wife implored that she should be allowed to be sacrificed, but the husband said it was his duty to meet the demon.

At this, their daughter, who was but eighteen, begged her parents to send her, as for her there could not be any home without a mother or a father.

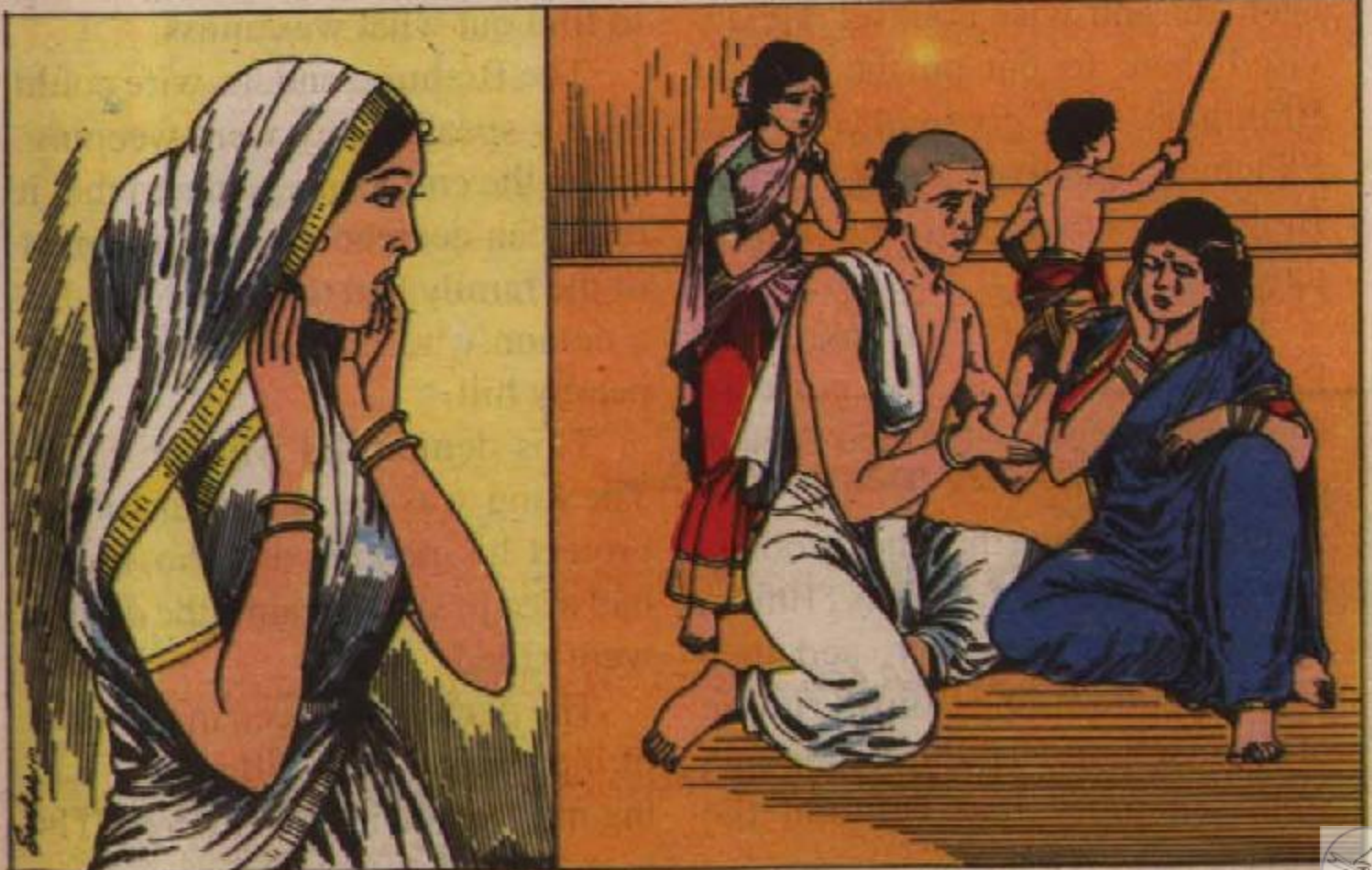
The little son picked up a piece of firewood and brandishing it above his head, shouted in his childish voice that he would go and kill the wicked demon.

Kunti now intervened. "Good people, do not despair. I've five sons, and one of them will take the food to the demon."

The Brahmin shook his head sadly and said he could never allow anyone to be sacrificed for the sake of his family.

"Have no fear," said Kunti proudly. "My son Bhima has superhuman strength and will certainly kill this demon."

When Kunti told Bhima the





whole story, he was full of enthusiasm at the thought of fighting another demon.

The next morning the bullock cart was laden with foodstuff, and Bhima set off in high spirits, promising to return before sunset.

By the time Bhima reached the demon's cave he was hungry, and began to eat the food in the cart. This maddened the demon, who rushed out of his cave at Bhima, but Bhima evaded the clutching arms, and quite

unconcerned, continued to eat.

At this the demon uprooted a tree and threw it at Bhima, who merely brushed it aside. Bhima then strode up to the demon and a great fight ensued. But Bhima was by far the stronger, and in the end, he threw the demon down and broke his back.

Bhima dragged the carcass of the demon to the gates of the city, and the people wept with joy that the awful menace hovering over their heads had been removed at last.

**Opportunity makes the thief**

**Enough is better than too much**

**It is hard to put old heads on young shoulders**

**No bees, no honey; no work, no money**



## HOW GOLBOL SOLVED A PROBLEM

**A** long long time ago, in a small hamlet, there lived a round, wise little man. He had a sweet circular face with chubby cheeks and a red red nose. His bald pate shone like a mirror in the sun, and he had such a large belly that when he sat down it comfortably rested on the ground.

True, he was looked upon as the wisest man in the village, but he was rather miserly with his wisdom and would not easily let it flow out of him. So, he always kept his mouth, ears, and even the nose all corked up. Naturally, he did not forget to leave some holes in the stopper that blocked his nostrils. For, he thought that the tiny pores were good enough

for the air to pass through but too small for his great wisdom to escape. He uncorked himself only to eat or whenever he had to give his opinion on matters really grave.

Every day he sat under the banyan tree, his legs crossed. His roundish owl-like eyes acknowledged with pride the graceful bows and greetings with which the passers-by honoured him.

Once an unusual event took place and the whole village was agog with excitement. It so happened that a mother gave her little son a handful of puffed rice. The boy received it in the palms of his joined hands, but unfortunately he had put his arms



round a pillar of their hut. As a result, as his hands were full, he could not separate them without dropping the rice on the floor nor could he move away. He was indeed in a fix and his mother raised a hue and cry.

That brought the villagers to the spot who took a serious note of the situation. They were, in fact, at a loss how to separate the boy from the pillar. So they hurried to Golbol babu—that was how the wise man was affectionately called – and requested him by signs to take off his corks. But no, he would not allow himself to be uncorked so easily, in spite of all the coaxings of the simple folks. How could he just spill out some of his precious wisdom by such meagre pleadings? Finally, he had to be carried to the actual scene.

Seeing the boy in such a sorry plight, Golbol babu at last nodded

his round head and conveyed that the case was indeed worthy of his attention.

He uncorked his mouth and quickly blurted out in one long breath: "Oh, now I understand how the whole world would be all dark without me! You fat heads, can't you think of such a simple solution? Just take off the roof and lift the boy over the top of the pillar! Now, quick! Cork me up again!"

After all, how could he let some extra amount of his genius escape? He was always doubly cautious to cork himself up as soon as he had given utterance to his wisdom.

So, the boy was safely lifted over the pillar. The mother was rather grateful to our round little wise man, Golbol babu, for so cleverly getting her son out of the crisis, though at the cost of the thatch of her roof!

(A.K.D.)





## THE BLUE FLOWER

**T**here once was a scholar called Vidyasagar, who ran a *gurukul*. He would choose just ten disciples – and give them training for one year. At the end of the year, he would send them back to their homes, and select another batch of ten students.

One year, among the ten thus selected was Sivaraj from Sivapuri. A month after their studies started, they happened to see their *guru* beckoning Ravindra to a corner and teaching him something special. This happened not just for one day; they found Vidyasagar and Ravindra together quite a number of times. They felt that their guru was being partial towards Ravindra. They decided to question their guru about this.

All the nine students one day approached Vidyasagar. "Revered guru!" they said in unison. "We've been watching you giving special coaching to Ravindra. Why do you

discriminate the nine of us? Aren't we equally clever and intelligent? Why do you have a special liking for Ravindra?"

"Each one of us has five fingers on our hand," said Vidyasagar. He did not appear to be upset by the students' behaviour. He spoke to them calmly. "But those five fingers are not alike. My disciples are also like the fingers; none of them is like another. They are different from each other. Some of them are able to grasp quickly what I teach; others may need repetition. Ravindra is from the first category. As he is able to grasp things fast, he is eager to learn more, and that's why he comes to me often and takes lessons from me. Any guru can identify an intelligent student instantly."

After listening to their guru, the nine students fell silent. They did not broach the subject with him

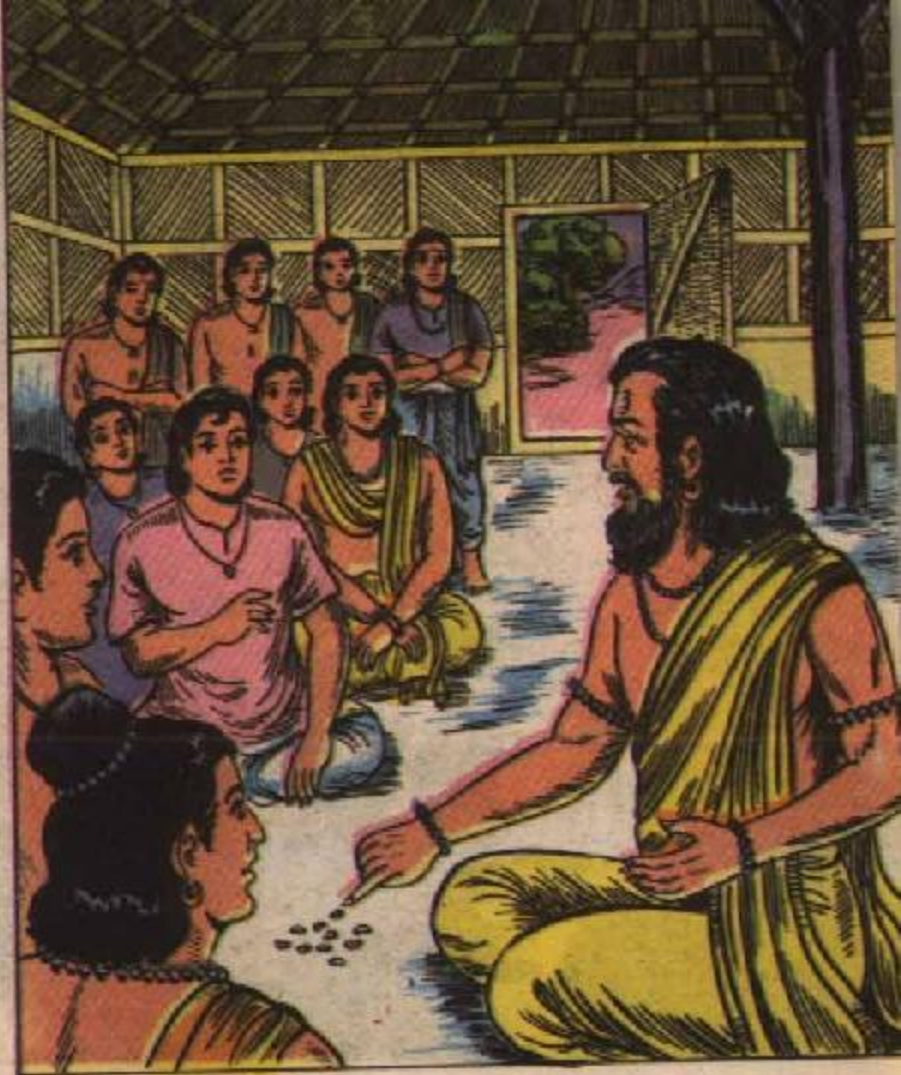
again. A year went by. It was time now for the students to leave the gurukul and go back home. Vidyasagar collected ten seeds from a plant and placed them on his palm. He then asked the students to take one each.

"You've all seen how the seeds look alike," remarked Vidyasagar. "I haven't given them to you myself but let each one of you pick a seed. Take the seed with you when you go home and grow a sapling in your garden. From one of the seeds will grow a plant which will have blue flowers. I don't know who has picked that one seed. Anyway, whoever gets a blue flower must come here and give me that flower as my *guru dakshina* (fee)."

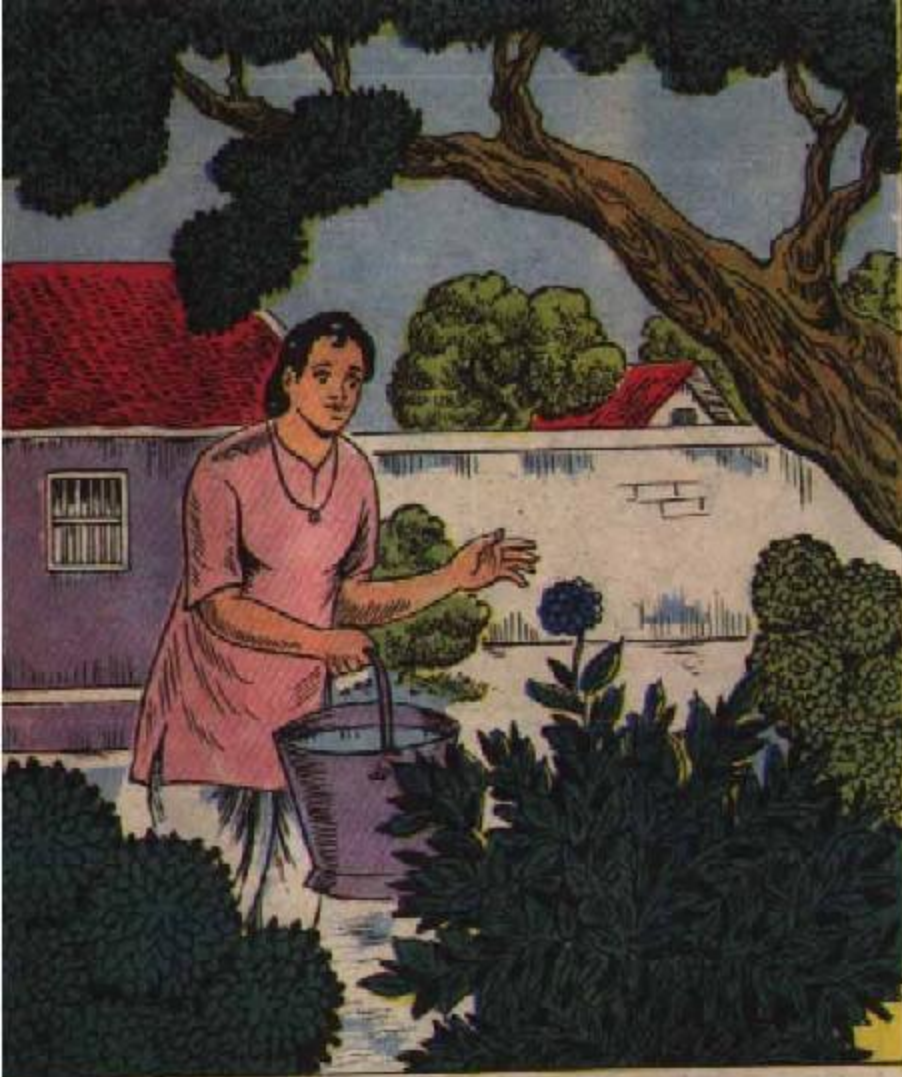
"O revered guru!" said Sivaraj. "Do we take it that the blue flower has some special properties?"

"You're right, Sivaraj," replied Vidyasagar. "If you were to munch the flower slowly, you'll be able to forecast rain. Anyone can acquire this power. I can myself get the power to forecast only if I get a flower from one of you. I had learnt about the flower from my guru."

The students kept the seeds with them with great care and took them home when they left the gurukul



after bidding farewell to their guru. Sivaraj prepared a special bed for the seed in his backyard and buried it deep in the ground. For the next few days, the villagers flocked to him, all eager to know what he had learnt at the gurukul. He described his life there and the villagers were all very happy that they now had in their midst someone who had acquired a lot of knowledge. "We hope all that you've learnt will be useful to the village and the villagers," they remarked. "How we wish we knew before hand when the rains would come. We can then plan our farm operations accordingly."



When they all left, Sivaraj began contemplating on their remark. If the seed grew into a plant and if the plant were to bring out a blue flower, he would himself munch it and acquire the power to predict rains. Why should he take the flower to the guru? What was the certainty that his village would benefit from his giving away the flower to his guru? If he himself could help his villagers, who knows they would not heap him with praise and presents?

Sivaraj now looked after the sapling that had begun to grow with great care. He watered the plant morning and evening; he would also

go to the nearby temple and pray that the plant should bring forth a blue flower soon.

His prayers seemed to have been answered, for, the plant was now growing buds all over, and before long a flower blossomed and it turned out to be a blue flower – just as his guru had told them. He was about to put it into his mouth when a thought came to him : 'Should I go and give it to the guru? But why should I? Didn't he discriminate among the students? Wasn't he partial to Ravindra? He was treated like his favourite student! Still it is I who got the blue flower. None of the nine others – including Ravindra – would have a blue flower growing from their plants. Sure, it is by the grace of God that the blue flower had bloomed on my plant – not because of the guru's blessings. No, I wouldn't take it to the guru. I shall myself munch it and acquire unlimited powers!'

He then began munching the flower and suddenly felt as if some unseen power was flowing through his body. He had also an uncanny feeling that it was going to rain in the next two days. He went out and told whoever he met on the road. "We'll have rains tomorrow or the day after. Get ready to go to your farms."

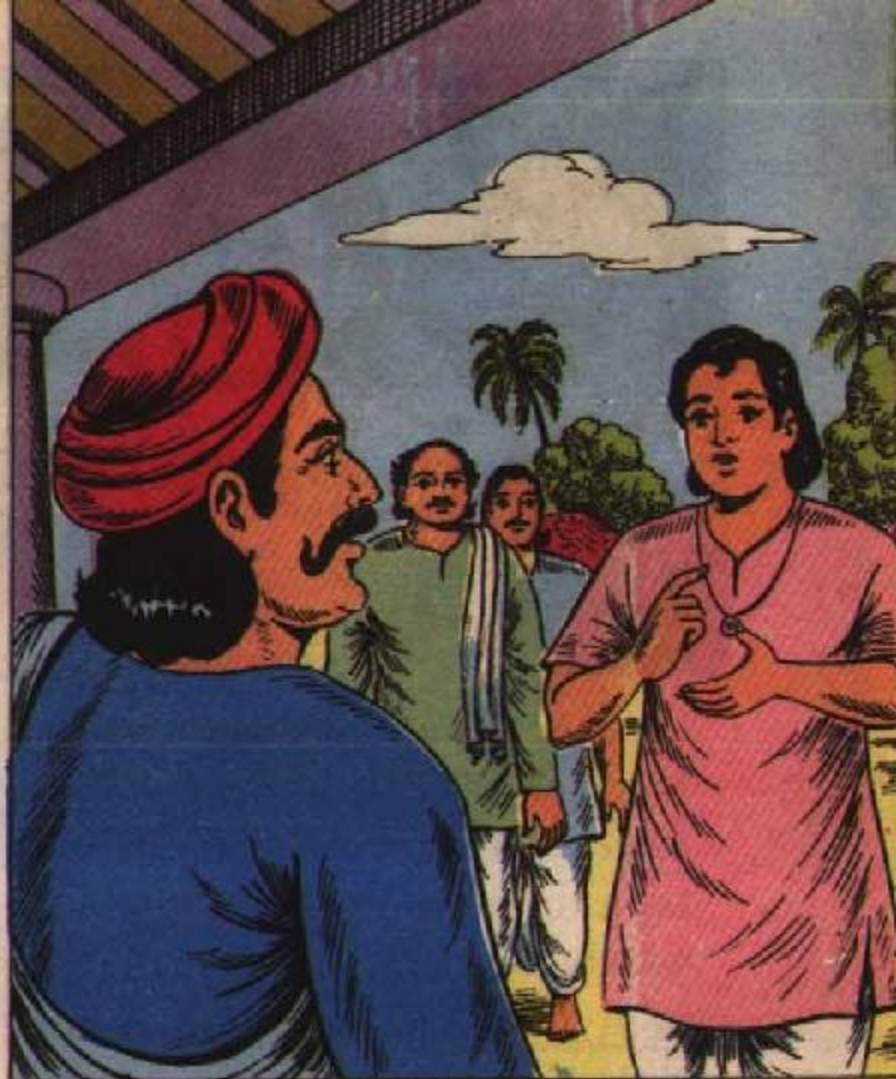


Much to his consternation, none of them took him serious, for, there was not a single speck of cloud in the skies. There was bright sunshine. Besides, it was not the season for rains. They did not stay longer with him to ask how he had come to the conclusion about impending rains.

But, wonder of wonders, it did rain as Sivaraj predicted. Now the villagers began to believe in whatever he said. They showered him with praise; and many gave him gifts, too. Word spread to the neighbouring villages also, and people from there went to him for advice. He was soon a popular figure in the village.

However, Sivapuri suffered from drought, as for another two years they had very scanty rains. "You need not expect any rain for the next one or two months," he told everybody who went to him for advice.

One day, the chief from the neighbouring village called on his counterpart in Sivapuri. At that time, Sivaraj and other seniors in the village were sitting with the chief of Sivapuri. Sivaraj took it for granted that the man had come to seek his advice. "There's all round drought. By merely asking me, would rains come down?" he said with some



scorn.

"Whenever I had approached you earlier," the visitor reminded him, "you used to predict and tell me when we could expect rains. Now, we don't have to come to you for advice. Our village has been graced by a sage and he predicted rains and it rained just as he predicted. I came here only to tell you about the sage and suggest that you invite him over here to solve your problem."

Sivaraj fell silent. The chief of Sivapuri sent some villagers along with the visitor to invite the sage to their village. Soon, he arrived, and gave a correct prediction, much to





the relief of the people, who now found it difficult to believe in the forecasts made by Sivaraj. He was keen to know who this sage was, who had become a rival to him. He soon found that the sage was none other than his mate in the gurukul, Ravindra.

"Till now, my predictions had proved correct," said Sivaraj dejectedly. "Those who went about praising me are now sneering at me. Has our guru done something to take away the powers I had acquired?"

"Our guru has not done anything like that, Sivaraj," replied Ravindra. "In fact, all the ten seeds that he gave us were capable of bringing

forth blue flowers. It was only to test us that he told us only one seed would give blue flowers. I alone had gone to him with the flower. He was very happy and gave me the *mantra* to make correct predictions, and returned the flower to me, advising me not to misuse the powers. I never disclosed my powers to anybody. Instead, I served them and helped them silently. It's not as if the guru had done something to take away your powers."

Sivaraj now realised how different he was from Ravindra, and why their guru took pains to pass on additional knowledge to a student like Ravindra.

**He doubts nothing who knows nothing**

**Too much good luck is ill-luck**

**Temperance is the best physic**

**Money is the ruin of many**

### Superstition only for some

**L**ast month we read in these pages a story in which a woman advises her husband going on a travel to sleep under a tamarind tree on his onward journey and under a neem tree on his way back. She had been told that as the tamarind gives out unhealthy vapours, the man would soon get ill and would hurry back, while the neem with its healing powers would make him healthy by the time he got back home! Hundreds of years ago, one of India's religious leaders – Chaitanya Mahaprabhu of Bengal – went on a pilgrimage to Vrindavan. On reaching there, he sat under a huge tamarind tree and gave his discourses. The place is popularly known as *Taintul talla*, meaning 'under the tamarind tree' (tamarind in Bengali is *tintil*). He chose a place where Lord Krishna used to tend cows. After Chaitanya's stay there, it became a sacred spot. Some people believe that the tree still exists. The tamarind does have a long life.

The leaves of the tamarind (*imli* or *ambli* in Hindi, *amli* in Marathi, *Chinta* in Telugu, and *puli* in Tamil and Malayalam) are small but thick. When tender, they are emerald green and soon acquire a darker shade. The flowers appear between April and June and have a sweet smell and appear on the branches in loose clusters. The colour alternates between yellow and pink. The fruits, rather longish and with a curve, are green in the beginning, but turn brown or a reddish black and the skin becomes brittle. Inside, from three to ten seeds can be seen, covered by a fibrous pulp.

The pulp is sweet, sometimes sour, too, and is a favourite with young people. The pulp is commonly used in curries and chutneys and for preparing sauce and a beverage. The seeds, pulp, and leaves have medicinal value.

Being hard and durable, the wood is used for making furniture, cart-wheels, mallets, and other products. Tamarind is not generally used as firewood. The tree is widely grown on waysides to provide shade.



## VASISHTHA

**W**ho gave shapes to the civilization, culture, and literature of India? There is only one answer to this question: The Rishis.

The Rishis were sages who devoted themselves to the quest of knowledge. When such a sage received a certain knowledge, he taught it to others, who were eager to learn it and who deserved to learn it. Thus, the sages were the earliest teachers in India. They taught both the princes and the children of the commoners several subjects. Their students lived with them in their hermitages, known as Gurukulas.

India's earliest poets, Valmiki and Vyasa, were sages. One of the earliest sages was Vasishtha. He mastered a great deal of knowledge. Knowledge enriched him with supernatural powers. However, he did not use such powers ordinarily.

One day, a mighty king, Viswamitra, was hunting in the forest in which Vasishtha lived. The king grew tired and wished to take rest. Someone pointed out to him the hermitage of Vasishtha situated in the cool shades of a grove, beside a stream.

The king was accompanied by his ministers, generals, and bodyguards. Vasishtha received them with affection.

The king and his men took a bath in the nearby stream. Lo and behold, when they returned to the hermitage, they found delicious dishes of food waiting for them. They least expected such a

treat in the hermitage of a sage who dwelt in a forest!

"How was this possible?" the king asked his host.

"I have a cow, Kamadhenu. She gives me whatever I wish to have," replied Vasishtha.

The king ate his food silently, but within him the desire to possess the miraculous cow grew irresistible. When it was time for him to depart, he asked the sage to make a gift of the cow to him.

But the sage could not oblige him. Kamadhenu was not an object which could be given away at its master's will. She lived with Vasishtha on her own will.

King Viswamitra got very angry. He tried to take the cow away forcibly. But the cow herself assumed a menacing posture. From out of her body, hundreds of fighting spirits emerged. King Viswamitra and his men were defeated.

That day, it was established that spiritual power is greater than physical power. Viswamitra himself became a hermit in order to develop spiritual power within himself. By and by, he became a sage. He wanted all to know that he was a Brahmarshi – one who had realised the Brahma or the Supreme Consciousness.

Even after Viswamitra became a sage, his wrath against Vasishtha did not cease. Rather it increased because Vasishtha refused to call him a

Brahmarshi. This shows how difficult it is for human nature to change. Even when one is enlightened in one part of his being, one may remain undeveloped in another part.

One day, according to a legend, Viswamitra was stealthily approaching Vasishtha's hut with the object of killing him. He overheard a conversation between Vasishtha and his wife.

"Why don't you proclaim Viswamitra a Brahmarshi? That will please him and he will stop harassing us!" Vasishtha's wife was saying.

"Viswamitra has achieved much. Still he falls short of the virtues necessary to

make him a Brahmarshi. If I call him Brahmarshi at this stage, he'll strive no more for any greater achievement. I've nothing but his good in mind," replied Vasishtha.

A great change came over Viswamitra. He apologised to Vasishtha.

Arundhati was the name of Vasishtha's wife. She was unique for her own spiritual attainments. After their death, they merged with the celestial bodies. In the chain of seven stars known as Saptarshi (*Ursa Major*), one star bears the name Vasishtha. Close to it twinkles a star, rather faint. She is identified with Arundhati.



# DO YOU KNOW?

1. How were the Russian Kings and Queens called?
2. The date August 9, 1942 has great importance in India's history. Why?
3. When was the Suez Canal opened? Which two seas does it connect?
4. Which two stations did the first railway line in India connect?
5. Which three powers constituted what has been called the Axis in the Second World War?
6. An Indian festival is celebrated once in 12 years. Which one?
7. Which is the largest island in the world?
8. Who was India's Captain when the country played its first Cricket Test match?
9. Which is the coldest place on earth?
10. Who brought India's first gold medal in the Olympic Games? When?
11. Who is credited with having made the first electric motor?
12. Which country is known as the 'Land of the Rising Sun'?
13. New York was originally a Dutch colony. What was it called then?
14. Who was the first Emperor of China?
15. An American Negro leader was the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. Name him.
16. Who was the first woman to climb Mount Everest and reach the peak? When?

## ANSWERS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 9. Vostok Station in Antarctica, where once the temperature recorded was -87.6 degrees Celsius. | 1. Tzar (or Czar) and Tzarina.   |
| 10. At the Games held in Paris in 1900, Norman Pritchard, a Britisher, had represented India.   | 2. The 'Quit India' movement was launched on that day.   |
| 11. Michael Faraday.  | 3. In 1869, The Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.   |
| 12. Japan.  | 4. Bombay and Thane. In 1853.  |
| 13. New Amsterdam. Amsterdam is the capital of Holland (The Netherlands).                       | 5. Germany, Italy, and Japan.  |
| 14. Kublai Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan.  | 6. Kumbh Mela.   |
| 15. Martin Luther King Jr.  | 7. Greenland - 2,715,600 sq. km. Though geographically an island, Australia (7,704,441 sq. km.) is generally taken as a continent. |
| 16. Junko Tabei, of Japan. On May 16, 1975.   | 8. C.K. Nayudu   |



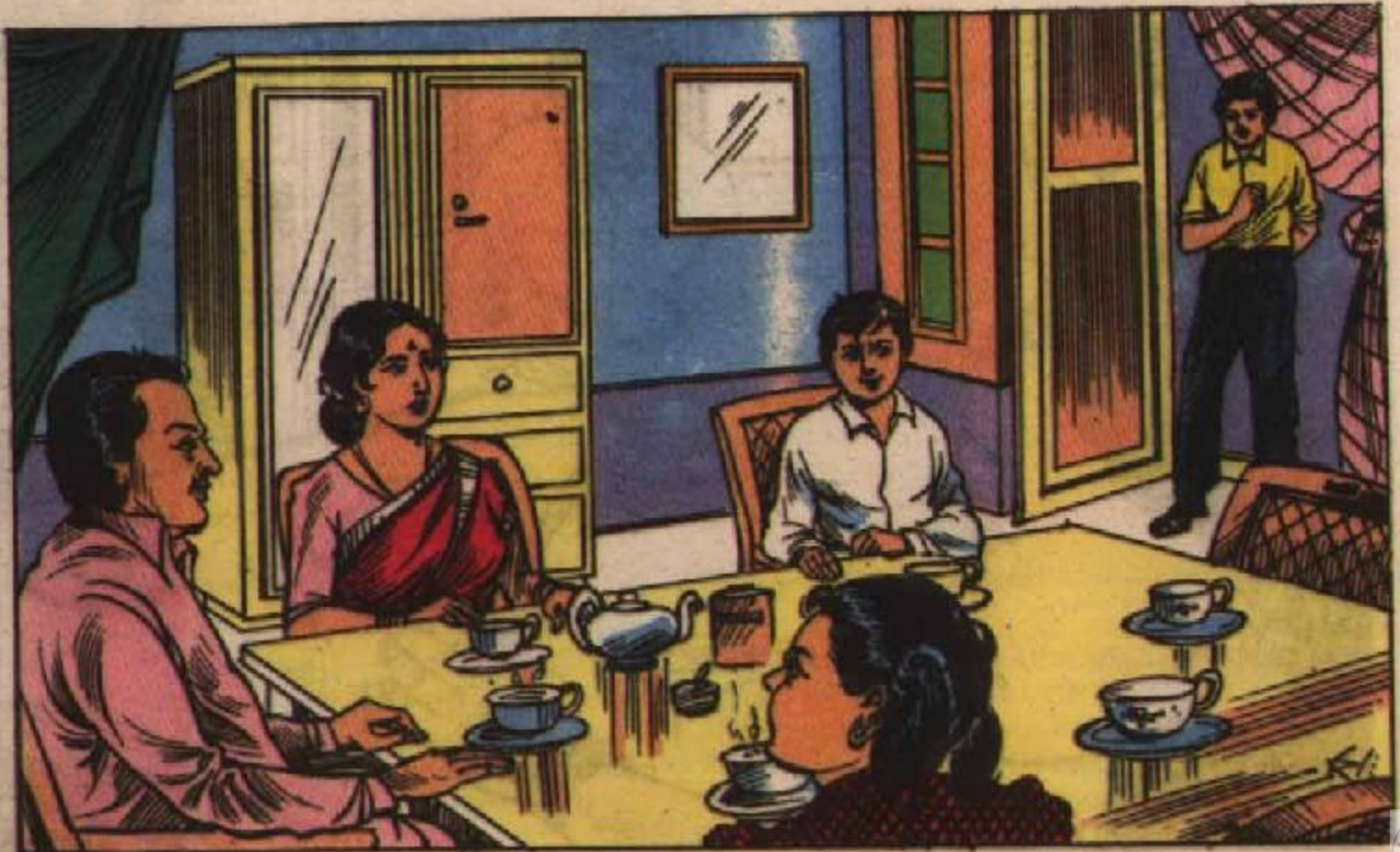
# FLOPPY

I still remember this little incident in my life. My uncle was a very soft-hearted person, but he could be a fool at times. He did not have any job, and so he was considered an unwanted burden by my father. My mother loved her brother, and definitely wanted him to live with us. 'Us' was our family, which consisted of my father, my mother, my brother, and myself.

My uncle, Raghu, was a lover of nature. He loved to go out into the open in the morning. (We lived out

in the country.) He watched every bird, every stir in the trembling grass, trying to answer the calls of birds. There were a few times when we did take him seriously. This one is definitely one of them.

That sunny morning, we were all sitting at the table when he came running into the room as if a thousand bulls were chasing him. We felt he was hiding something from us. He sat down on his chair, with a bump, and I giggled. I got a hefty kick from under the table and an



unwavering glare – the former from my brother, Murali, and the latter from my mother. I was keeping myself from groaning, when my mother gave him his cup of tea. He went on to pour it out into his saucer, but instead of drinking, he put something on the table among the tea-cups. A tiny brown rabbit! A small rabbit, sitting against the bread as if a made thing. "A rabbit! A young one! Who gave it to you, Chitappa?" I asked, excitedly.

But he just laughed and went to put away his slippers. I jumped towards the rabbit. "Is it alive? Can you feel its heartbeat?" I was so excited that I was yelling!

"See what I mean. She's still a baby or rather she's immature. So excited about a rabbit!" said Murali, addressing my mother.

Usually, I would have fought with him but that day I just did not rise to the bait.

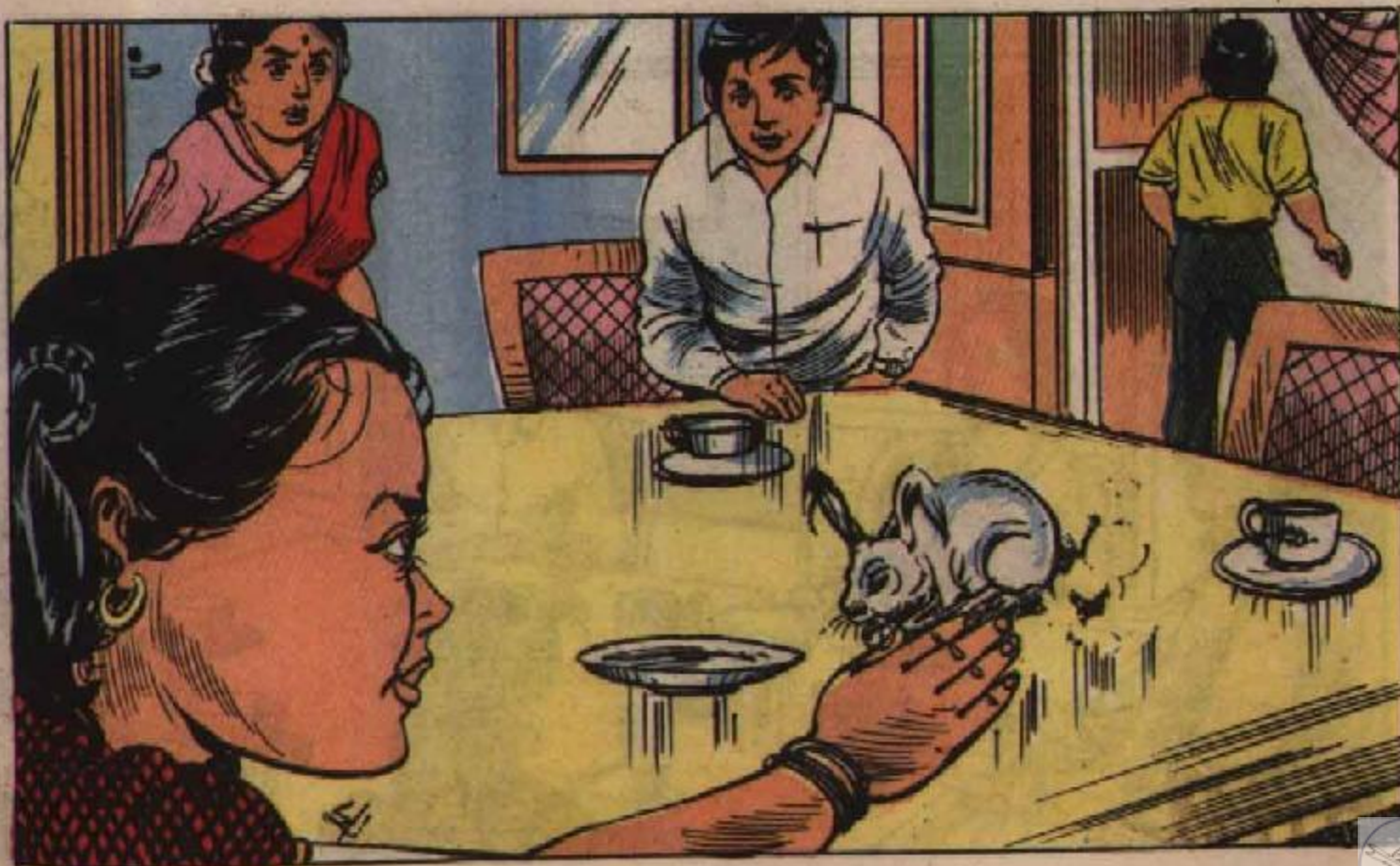
My dear Chitappa came back and sat down with a bump, but this time no one laughed. I asked him eagerly, "Where did you get it, Chitappa?"

"I picked it up," he answered in an elderly voice.

"Where?" I asked.

"It's a wild one!" my mother interrupted.

He answered, "Yes, it is."



"Then, why did you bring it?" cried my mother.

"Oh, I want it," came my answer to that.

"Yes, I've no doubt you do...." answered my mother. But she was drowned in the noise of questions from me and Murali, who was more than two minutes ago not interested.

On the field, my Chitappa had found a dead mother rabbit and three dead little ones – this one alive, but not moving. "But what killed it, Chitappa?"

"I can't say, child. I should think she had eaten something."

"Why did you bring it?" Again my mother's voice of scolding. "You

know how it will be."

He made no answer, but we were loud with disagreement. "He did good in bringing it. It's too small to live by itself. It will die," we shouted.

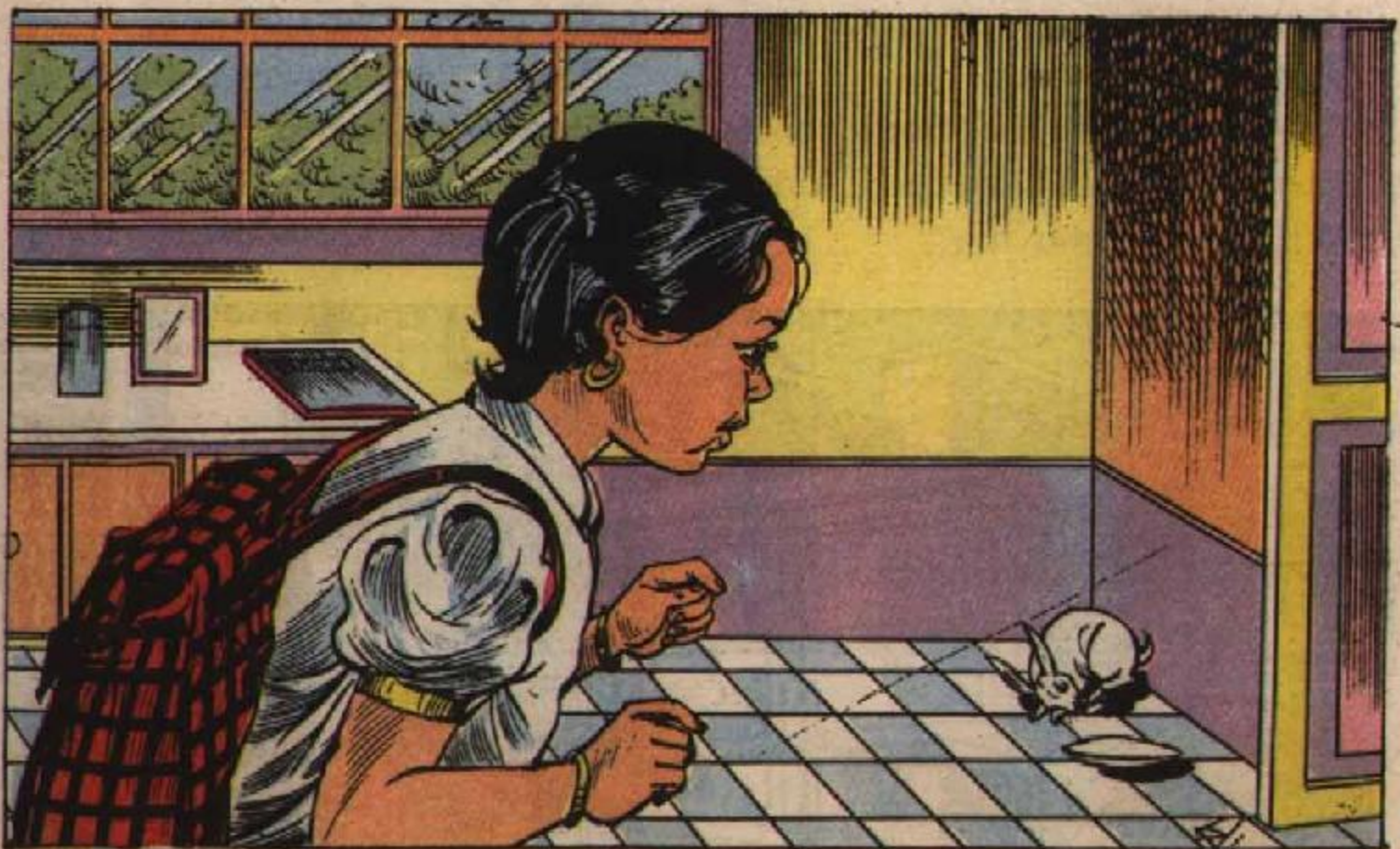
"Yes, and it will die now. And then there will be another outcry." My mother hated the tragedy of dead pets.

Our hearts sank. "It won't die. Chitappa, will it? It won't."

"I should think not," said Raghu in his new found voice.

"You know well enough it will. Haven't we had it all before?" said my mother.

"They don't always die," said Raghu angrily. But my mother re-



mind him of the other little animals he had brought, which sulked and refused to live and brought storms of tears and trouble into our house.

Trouble fell on us. The rabbit sat on my lap, unmoving, its eyes wide open and bright. We brought it milk and held it to its nose. It sat still as if it was far away, in some hidden hole. We wetted its mouth with milk. It gave no sign, it did not even shake off the drops.

"What did I say? Take it and put it down in the field." Mother's command was, however, in vain.

We were driven to get dressed for school. Wrapping it in a piece of cotton, I put it in a dark corner of the dining room, and put a saucer of milk under its nose.

After coming back from school, I saw it sit still and I wailed, "Amma! Why is it not moving?"

"It prefers to sulk its life away, stupid thing!" mother retorted.

We put some leaves under its nose but it took no notice. Yet its eyes were bright. It remained still the whole evening and it was then shifted to the store room.

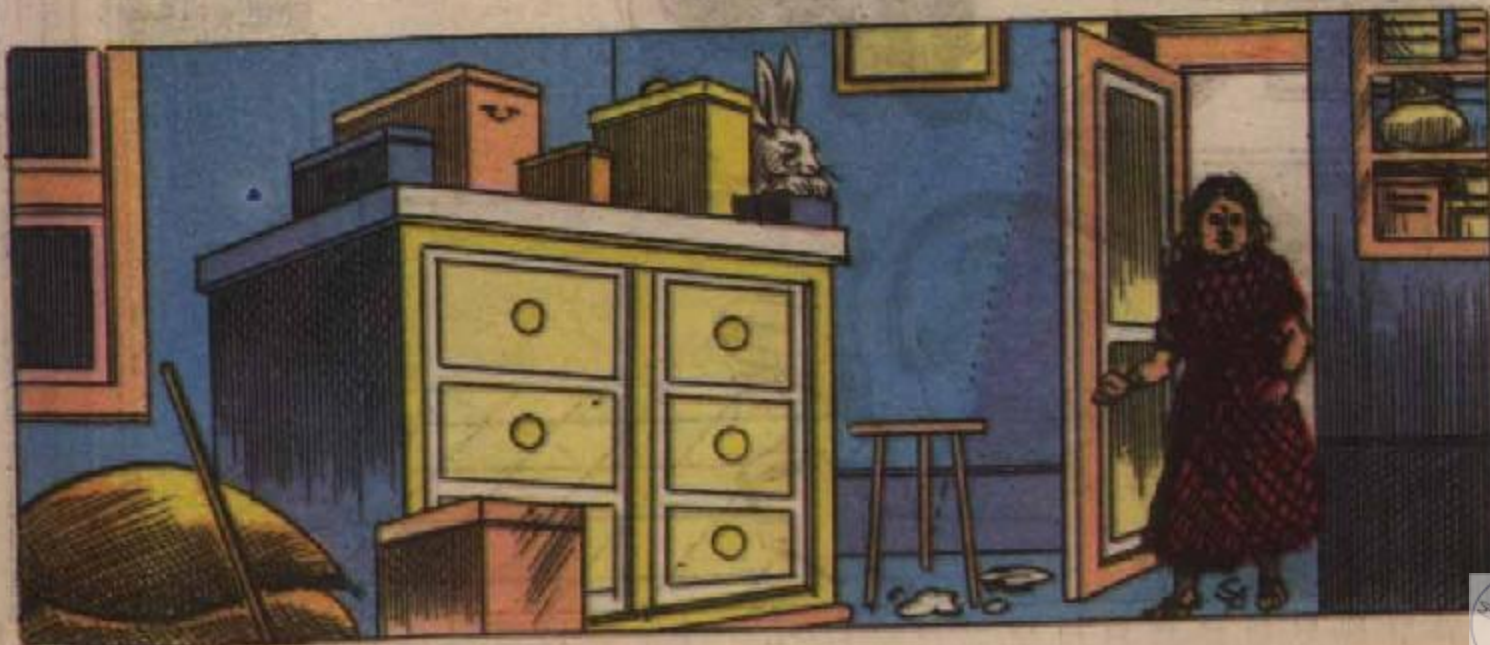
Morning came. I took my bath and got ready and went to get my shoes from the store room. I saw drops of milk all over the floor. And there was the rabbit, the top of his floppy ears showing over a tin! He peeped out and sat there bright-eyed, moving his nose and looking at me.

He was alive, very much alive. "Chitappa!" Raghu stopped at the door. "Chitappa, he is alive!"

"Of course," he said.

By evening, however, the little creature—now named Floppy, after his ears—was tame, quite tame.

— SUSHMA KRISHNAMURTHI (13)





## LET US KNOW

**Who found that rubber can be used as an eraser?**

**– Sunil Kumar, Bareilly**

Sometime around the 1750s, a British merchant received some pieces of crude rubber from a rubber planter in South America. The merchant thought there might not be any demand in Britain and so decided not to do any trading in rubber. The pieces were lying around in his godown, and his children picked them up and played with them. They gave a piece to their friend, Joseph Priestly, who tried it on a paper in which he had written something with pencil. He erased it easily. Can we say the boy Priestly thus made an invention?

**When India was affected by plague last year, I read somewhere about Oberammergau. I cannot find this place in my atlas. What is its connection with plague?**

**– Madhvi Mehta, Ahmedabad**

You did not see the place in your school atlas because it is a small village in the Alps near Germany's border with Austria. More than 350 years ago, Oberammergau was struck by the Black Plague which took away nearly a thousand lives. The village elders went up to the church and took a vow that they would devote a whole year in every ten to prepare and present a Passion play in worshipful prayer to the Lord. There were no more deaths in the village, though the epidemic spread to other parts of Europe and caused great havoc. The crowd scenes in the play have some 500 actors who will, therefore, need a huge stage. Actors are selected by ballot and rehearsals start in May, though the play is staged only 12 months later. People travel long distances to see the 8-hour play.

# KING RAGHAVENDRA



**S**age Suryananda had a small ashram near the kingdom of Kosala. He trained his disciples in art, literature, and the use of weapons. Every evening, he used to tell his students a story that had a message, advising his students to acquire good and virtuous qualities that one need possess to become successful in life.

One evening, the students had gathered under the big banyan tree eagerly awaiting their *guru*. Soon he appeared and the students prostrated before him. He blessed each one of them and took his seat on a platform

beneath the tree. He, then, spoke in a clear, crisp voice : "Jealousy, anger, and greed are the three most pernicious qualities in man; they impede his path to success. These traits make him look at everyone with scorn; he becomes indifferent towards the feelings and problems of others. He thinks only about himself and does not hesitate to harm others to achieve his goal or his selfish motives in life. Today I shall tell you the story of a king, who invited his death by his unkind attitude towards his subjects and who later realised how pleasing it is to

## 1. AN IRRESPONSIBLE KING

live for others, rather than being narrow-minded and self-interested." He paused to look at each face, to find how eager they were to hear the story.

Long ago, there lived a king called Raghavendra who ruled the kingdom of Kanaka. He had all the makings of an able and just ruler, but he was very lazy and greedy. He was not at all interested in the administration of his kingdom and was callous to the various difficulties and hardships suffered by his subjects. He imposed heavy taxes on them, least bothering how a poor man could afford to pay a huge amount as tax. And instead of using the taxes for the welfare of his subjects, he used the money for his own benefit. He wasted it in renovating the already grand palace and erecting statues of his ancestors and of himself. He used to while away his time either watching dances and listening to music or playing dice with his queen, Savitri. They had a son named Raghunath.

Raghavendra's father had been an ideal king, and the kingdom prospered under his rule. Now it was losing its past glory under the misrule of Raghavendra. His father had made friendship with the rulers of



the neighbouring countries. If at all Raghavendra did any noble act, it was that he continued their friendship. Veerendra had maintained this friendship for a political reason. He did not know when a powerful enemy might attack his kingdom; in that hour of crisis, he would need instant help. Besides, if the neighbouring countries were his foes, then they would always be waiting for an opportunity to lead an attack on his kingdom for expanding their territories. If he maintained friendship with those countries, then such a contingency could be averted.

Raghavendra kept up their



friendship so that he could enjoy peace and pleasure. It was his good fortune that his neighbour-friends did not take undue advantage of his weak rule.

It was not as if anyone had not advised or cautioned Raghavendra. Till Veerendra breathed his last, he tried to acquaint his son with the many responsibilities of a king towards his subjects, but all that had fallen on deaf ears. Even Raghavendra's wife, Savitri, tried to wake him up from his slumber, but to no avail. The king would get infuriated when anybody tried to remind him of his duties.

One day, the king of neighbour-

ing Chanda came on a friendly visit. Raghavendra received Chitrasena warmly and ordered that all arrangements be made for the comfort of the king. The two rulers had a wonderful time indeed. Raghavendra did all that was possible to make his friend happy. He felt himself happy when Chitrasena praised him, especially for what he did to the magnificent-looking palace. In the evenings, he would take Chitrasena out for a walk in the city. Though Raghavendra claimed that his subjects were happy under his rule, Chitrasena could notice the disgust and sad look on their faces. He never found Raghavendra spar-



ing any time for his people or paying any heed to their problems. He very much wished to advise him in this regard, but restrained himself from doing so, knowing well the character of his friend. Outside the king's grand palace, the country gave a piteous sight. Chitrasena felt sorry for the people of Kanaka.

One night when Raghavendra and Chitrasena were engrossed in a game of dice, a guard came in and bowed before the king. "Sire, please pardon me for disturbing you. A boy wants to meet you urgently. He says he has a genuine problem."

The king was disturbed and he could not tolerate any interruption during his favourite game. He shouted angrily, "Who's that boy? How dare he disturb me at this part of the night? Ask him to go away or else, he'll have to face dire consequences!"

The guard nodded and went away

to carry out the king's orders.

Chitrasena was very much upset by the king's behaviour. "My friend! We can continue with this game later. I feel that the boy should be heard. Didn't the guard say he has a genuine problem?"

Just as Raghavendra was about to reply, he heard shouts outside: "O merciless king! You're not fit to be our king. O God! What sin did we commit to get such a stony-hearted man as our king!" The voice was quivering with rage. "What right does a king have to live if he has such a callous attitude towards his subjects?..."

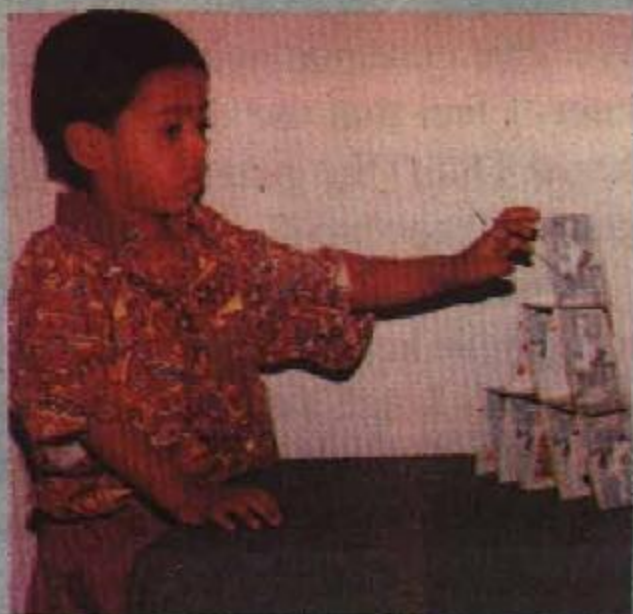
Raghavendra stood up infuriated. He came outside to find a young boy of probably seventeen or eighteen hurling all those abuses at him.

— V. Rajesh

(To continue)



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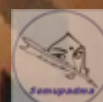
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